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University Career Services Centers in Turkey: A sequential mixed-method study

Türkiye'deki Üniversitelerde Kariyer Gelişimini Destekleyici Hizmetler: Bir Karma Yöntem Çalışması

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ABSTRACT

This article is based on a qualitatively driven, sequential explanatory mixed-method study that explored the status of university career services in Turkey. The first phase involved a nationwide survey to identify the existing career center structures and career development support services models. It also helped to create a purposeful sample of career development professionals and interview questions for the second phase that provided more insight into the strengths and needs of university career centers from the perspectives of career development professionals. Based on an interpretation and discussion of the integrated results from the survey and interviews, the authors gathered implications and recommendations for improving career centers in relation to the existing literature of career services centers and career development needs among university students in Turkey.

Makale Bilgileri

Keywords
Career centers, career services, career development professionals

Anahtar Kelimeler
Kariyer merkezleri, kariyer hizmetleri, kariyer merkezi çalışanları

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ÖZET

Bu araştırmada Türkiye'deki üniversitelerde hizmet veren kariyer merkezlerinin durumu, nicel verilerin ardından ardışık, açıklayıcı karma çalışma yöntemi ile incelenmiştir. İlk aşamada ulusal olarak var olan kariyer merkezlerinin yapısı ve verdikleri hizmetleri belirlemek için bir tarama çalışması yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmaya dayalı olarak, bu merkezlerde çalışan ve kariyer destek hizmeti verenlerle derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılarak merkezlerin güçlü yanları ve ihtiyaçları onların bakış açısından anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Tarama çalışması ve görüşmelerden elde edilen bulguların ortak yanları metinde bütünleştirilerek sunulmuştur. Araştırmada elde edilen bulgular kariyer gelişimi, kariyer merkezleri ve Türkiye'deki üniversite öğrencilerinin kariyer ihtiyaçlarıyla ilgili alan yazını ışığında tartışılmış, bulguların doğurguları ortaya konmuş ve kariyer merkezlerinin daha da etkili hale gelebilmelerine yönelik bazı öneriler sunulmuştur.

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INTRODUCTION

While it's not the only reason and outcome, the fundamental expectation from a university education is to gain meaningful employment with promising work readiness. In Turkey, approximately 44% of the youth population enroll in higher education (Turkish Statistical Institute [TSI], 2021a), which is parallel to the significant increase in the number of universities (Higher Education Council [HEC], 2019). On the other hand, about 36% of university graduates in Turkey are unemployed and many are predicted to face increased underemployment based on the lower enrollment of university graduates in professional work areas that require a university degree (Buyukgoze-Kavas et al., 2021; Susanlı, 2017). Furthermore, the long-existing gender gap became larger with only 31% of working-age women participating in the labor market compared to 69% of men (TSI, 2021b) along with inadequate attention to the career development needs in other diversity and equity contexts.

Given these pressing needs, we argue that university career services need more critical attention from both public and private stakeholders. University career services have a crucial role to address career planning and work readiness needs of university students as early as possible, and to support them in the processes of internship and job search (Auter & Marken, 2016; Busteed, 2020; National Association for Colleges and Employers [NACE], 2019). In this study, we explore the university career centers in Turkey to understand their working structures, strengths, and needs in relation to the career development needs of university students and from the perspectives of career development professions (CDPs) who work at university career centers.

Career Development and Help-Seeking Needs of University Students

Besides the alarming statistics of national unemployment rates among university graduates and in general, several studies that explored the psychological counseling needs of university students identified increased career development needs (Atik & Yalçın 2010; Dogan, 2012; Karataş & Gizir, 2013). More recently, additional studies uncovered university students' specific career development needs for (1) being prepared to transition to work-life and creating a career plan (Yerin Güneri et al., 2016), and (2) having more information about the employment opportunities (Eraslan-Çapan & Korkut-Owen, 2020; Korkut-Owen, 2018). Also, university students are reported to struggle with increased levels of stress and anxiety (Fouad et al., 2016; Yerin Güneri et al., 2016; Eraslan-Çapan & Korkut-Owen, 2020) along with a connection between career adaptability and subjective well-being for university seniors (Kırdök & Bölükbaşı, 2018). It's also recommended to address environmental support, self-efficacy beliefs, and outcome expectations to help university students develop effective career goals (Işık, Ulubey, & Kozan, 2018).

The critical interrelatedness between career development (e.g., work satisfaction or performance, job loss, unemployment, underemployment) and psychological well-being is well supported and extensively reviewed elsewhere in the literature (e.g., Ford et al., 2011; APA, 2020; Tang et al., 2020). A study conducted in the United States found a relationship between psychological distress and career-related variables among undecided university students, however, only half of the respondents were aware

of the career services center (Fouad et al., 2006). More recent studies have similar findings revealing career-related anxiety among college students (e.g., Pisarik et al., 2017), as well as an increased rate of work-related mental health concerns among graduate students (e.g., Levecque et al., 2017).

Other examples of specific career development needs among university students are selecting an occupation that aligns with one's interests and abilities, selecting an educational plan that will lead to a good job, and talking to someone about the qualifications needed for occupational options, which are based on a survey with 100, 727 incoming first-year students from 338 different higher education institutions in the United States (Normyle, 2014). More studies found similar findings that indicate college students need to talk to someone about qualifications required for specific occupations (e.g., Karimi et al., 2014; Lee & Patel, 2019) and receive information about employment opportunities (Crişan, Pavelea, & Ghimbulut, 2014).

On the other hand, according to Akoğlan, Kozak, and Dalkıranoğlu (2013), university students do not receive sufficient support while making career decisions and financial struggles override the career opportunities they could consider. Some recent studies also indicate that university students receive support about career development and planning mostly from their instructors (Işık, 2007; Yerin Güneri et al., 2016). Instructors (faculty members) are perceived as the primary source of career development support followed by family members, psychological counselors at the private tutoring centers, internet (online resources), friends, and school counselors (Korkut-Owen, 2018). More studies show that instructors are a primary source of career development support (Işık, 2007; Yerin Güneri et al., 2016) and career counselors and career centers are later in the list of help-seeking resources (Korkut-Owen & Eraslan-Çapan, 2020). These findings also align with the literature from outside of Turkey where university students rely on online resources, television, written materials, family, and friends before they seek help from career services (Crişan, Pavelea, & Ghimbulut, 2014), as well as instructors as a primary source of connection (Kniveton, 2004; Zondag & Brink, 2017). The above-mentioned career development needs and sources of support indicate that university career centers entail greater attention to become more accessible and relevant to the student needs by using current and comprehensive services that proactively support them throughout the university years.

Career Development Services in Turkey

In general, career development in Turkey is primarily addressed by the Ministry of Education (e.g., vocational guidance services in schools, online platforms for students to explore occupational options and trends) and Higher Education Council (HEC) such as information about the higher education institutions, majors, and graduate education programs and their requirements, however, they do not provide any direct career development services. They focus on educational and occupational decision-making through mostly information resources.

Career development services are formally addressed by the Ministry of Family, Labor, and Social Services in Turkey. Under this ministry, there are several departments that address employment (and unemployment) related areas such as the status of women, occupational health and safety, and union

organizations. Among these departments, the Directorate General for Labor has the services most relevant to career development that include finding solutions to the structural problems in the labor market, increasing employment rates, improving the social welfare assistance system, addressing employment needs of disadvantaged populations, and providing healthy and safe working conditions to all workers (Directorate-General for Labor, 2021). Besides the systemic-level employment services projects under this directorate, the Turkish Employment Agency (ISKUR) is another important organization under the same ministry and operate through public employment agencies.

The current ISKUR was established in 2003 almost two decades after globalization, technological improvements, and the information age have started to shape the world of work in the 1980s. Since then, several public employment agencies, large-scale projects, and smaller programs have served individuals looking for vocational training and employment opportunities (ISKUR, 2021). In addition to the ISKUR services, there are other agencies and programs such as employment services programs created by the city governments. For example, The Municipality of Istanbul (IBB) offers career education days with university counseling and guidance service booths for high school students who need support to choose universities and majors based on their central university placement exam scores. The IBB services also include some training programs such as fundamental computer skills (IBB, 2021). While all these programs at the national and local levels are valuable, the needs that emerge from the sharp increase in the number of universities and university graduates do not seem to be met by the existing services (Buyukgoze-Kavas, 2017). Furthermore, career development needs encompass issues beyond educational decisions and job applications, especially for university students who need to prepare themselves for an increasingly uncertain, unstable job market in the 21st century in a new climate of economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

University Career Centers in Turkey

As a relatively young and still developing service area, higher education career services in Turkey show differences in relation to under which academic or student affairs units they are established. Their structures, services, and activities vary from university to university (Erdoğmuş, 2001) with no standardization between services provided by career centers. Erdogmus (2001) also showed that career services activities predominantly focused on resume resources, career days and workshops that introduce companies, and job placement efforts. In another study, Bacanlı, Eşici, and Altunbaş (2009) found that career services serve three main groups: students, alumni, and employers. The activities for students included career fairs, announcing job and internship opportunities, and career counseling. The services for alumni focused on gathering and sharing success stories, announcing scholarship opportunities, creating alumni career networks, training programs, conducting surveys, and mentorship programs. The activities for employers, on the other hand, included career programs and online resume catalogs. In another study that explored the websites of all university career centers in Turkey also showed that only about half of them had career services and most of them were in private universities (Cevher, 2015). Although the services at these universities included some self-exploration focus, the majority focused on

the exploration of the job market, informational resources on internships, and support for job search and application processes.

According to a more recent study that explored the main goals and activities of university career centers in Turkey by a content analysis of their by-laws, there were 32 university career centers that were formally recognized under the Council of Higher Education (Özden, 2015). More than half of the universities had activities that primarily included promoting their services to students, connecting with alumni, exploring job opportunities, delivering career development workshops, creating student and company databases, organizing company site visits, providing career guidance, and helping with internship search in this exact order.

After the above-mentioned studies that explored the career services center through their websites, the first study, which used a survey to collect career services information before our current study, explored a smaller sample of eleven university career services in Istanbul (Zeren et al., 2017). The findings showed that the number of career services centers and their personnel was limited compared to high student numbers. About 73% of them were established and managed internally by specific colleges (e.g., College of Business), and 45% collaborated with the ISKUR as the major external stakeholder. All career centers offered conferences and other events to market their services, and about 90% also organized networking events to connect students and employers. They reported that university students seek their services mostly for learning about internship opportunities, creating resumes/CVs, preparing for interviews, career decision making, or changing their career plans.

While the above-reviewed university career services models include diverse activities, they focus on more traditional services (e.g., support for the internship/job search and application process). Furthermore, the studies that explored students' perspectives on the effectiveness of career services show that while students found these services essential, students also perceived them as inadequate in meeting their needs (e.g., Adin, 2015; Kara et al., 2016; Tecirli, 2017). Thus, it's promising to see a significant increase in the number of university career centers in the last few years after the establishment of the Human Resources Office under the presidency of the Republic of Turkey (CBİKO). This office was reorganized with new strategic plans such as launching career centers at every university, creating a new Career Gate initiative to connect university students and graduates to job postings, and designing new programs (e.g., Vision and Self-Awareness Training for students who are granted a scholarship to study abroad; CBİKO, 2018). More recently, new developments such as requiring a career planning course at each university and providing remote professional training to the university career services show the increased awareness about the critical need for career services.

On the other hand, university students in the 21st-century information age and pandemic world have increasingly complicated needs. University career centers are recommended to create and adopt more effective and innovative career services models according to the changing needs of university students (e.g., Damar, Dereli, & Dicle, 2015; Işık & Erdem, 2018). The university career center models should be redesigned according to the changes and unpredictability of the current world of work that shift the career development needs of students. However, we first need a better understanding of the existing structure and models in Turkey, which is the purpose of this study.

The Rationale for the Current Study

As discussed earlier, the status of the higher education career services in Turkey reflects more traditional practices with ongoing challenges of accessibility and comprehensiveness due to the limited number of career centers and their personnel or team size. The review of the literature demonstrated that the existing career centers strive to meet the needs of increasing numbers of students, and the recent developments, especially the presidential order to open career centers at all universities, will require more systematic and sustainable support for higher education careers services. Thus, there is an ongoing need to better understand the structures, services, and needs of these services, especially from the perspectives of career development professionals who work at these institutions. While there were studies that focused on this need by exploring the career services websites (e.g., Cevher, 2015) and surveying the career centers in a specific city (e.g., Zeren et al., 2017), there wasn't a study that aimed to provide a general picture of career services nationwide and explored the career development professionals' views regarding the status of career services at the time we planned this study. In this study, we strived to contribute to the field by inviting all university career centers we could reach and learning from the career development professionals through in-depth interviews that were planned and facilitated by the findings of an initial survey under a sequential explanatory mixed-method study design.

The purpose of this study was to provide a general picture of the status of university career services in Turkey followed by a deeper understanding of them from the perspectives of career development professionals. The specific aims were:

1) identify the existing career center structures and career development support services models,

2) explore the strengths and needs of university career centers from the perspectives of career development professionals, and

3) gather the recommendations and implications for improving career centers based on an integration of findings from the above-listed questions and in relation to the existing literature of career services.

METHODS

Study Design

The first two aims of this study (as indicated in the previous section) were addressed with a survey that included both quantitative and qualitative sections in the first phase that helped us create a purposeful sample and questions for semi-structured interviews with career development professionals in the second phase. The last aim was achieved by refining and explaining the

descriptive and thematic survey results considering the themes from the interviews. Thus, we used an explanatory sequential mixed-method design, which typically involves a quantitative first phase followed by a qualitative second phase and is only complete with a clear integration and interpretation of the findings from both phases (Creswell & Clark, 2018).

The rationale for mixing both types of data is that the university career centers' status was not explored comprehensively in the past. The findings that reflect the complex issues of university career services from career development professionals' perspectives and experiences were also limited. For this same reason, we did not have a sufficient understanding of the university career centers in Turkey to be able to develop a fully quantitative instrument in the first phase of the study. Using quantitative and qualitative methods together is suggested when a more complete picture of the research problem is needed (Johnson & Turner, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) which is the case in this study. Thus, we embedded a secondary method (using open-ended questions that led to qualitative data) in our survey that was primarily quantitative and descriptive as the first phase of sequential explanatory mixed-method design (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Therefore, our study is a qualitatively driven mixed-method approach (qual → QUAL). It acknowledges that social reality is multiple and our purpose as researchers is primarily to understand the status of career services by comparing and contrasting thematic data (Hesse-Biber et al., 2015).

The first phase of the study

The survey design. After obtaining institutional board approval from the first author's university, we designed a survey that included both quantitative and qualitative sections. We designed the survey based on the common structure of higher education career services models (Herr, Rayman, & Garis, 1993), as well as the professional standards for career services such as the National Career Development Association (NCDA, 2010) and the National Association for Colleges and Universities (NACE) in the United States. (NACE, 2019).

While we used models and standards from around the world due to the lack of relevant standards in Turkey when this study was planned, the survey was designed in the Turkish language with the translation and adaptation of some constructs (e.g., career psychological counselor [KPD] vs career counselor) according to the professional cultural context in Turkey. Turkish is the native language of the first three authors while English is the native language of the fourth author. This composition allowed for an in-depth discussion of possible questions and careful choice of terminology. We sent the first survey draft to a group of six experts in the career counseling field. After their feedback and suggestions, the survey questions were finalized by our research team and transformed into an anonymous online survey link under the first author's secure institutional account. The survey listed 20 career services activity areas which can be seen in Table 1.2 where we listed the findings of the most frequently provided services.

We asked the participants to rate the frequency of their services from 1 (least frequent) to 5 (most frequent) to create an index for each service area. We also asked participants key background information: the most recent professional degree and area of degree study, job title, the populations they serve most actively, university type (i.e., public versus private). Besides these multiple-choice and short-answer questions, we asked participants to respond to three open-ended questions by listing 1) the most frequently presented needs by those who seek their services, 2) what service areas they perceived as strongest, and 3) the key stakeholders they collaborated with. Finally, the last survey item asked participants to leave their contact information if they are interested in an interview meeting. No compensation was offered or given for research participation.

The target population. We aimed to reach professionals who work at university career centers in Turkey. Parallel to the process of survey design, the second author explored the career services websites of 203 universities (the number of universities at the time that this study was planned). Out of a total number of 53 university career centers at the time (CBİKO, 2020), we were able to access 48 universities that had websites and contact information for their university career centers. These 48 (27 public and 21 private) universities that had contact information constituted our participant sample for the survey.

Data collection and analysis. The participants received an electronic invitation for the survey. The online survey system was anonymous while it was optional for the participants to share their contact information at the end if they were interested in a follow-up interview (see below for the second phase of the study). At the first round of data collection, there was a very limited response rate. Thus, we reminded the survey invitation two times and about two weeks apart from each other. Out of all the responses, the responses from 20 university career centers provided sufficient data to analyze them, which corresponds to about 42% of the overall university center population in Turkey based on the total number of 53 career centers at the time we collected data.

We analyzed the survey data by using descriptive statistics for the quantitative questions, while we also used thematic analysis for the open-ended questions according to the guidelines of thematic analysis in psychology by Braun and Clarke (2006). This thematic analysis method is used for any data set to identify and explain themes or patterns. It also allows interpretation of the themes beyond identification (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Further details of this data analysis method are explained in the next section.

The Second Phase of the Study

Participants. We conducted interviews with six professionals. Participants are named with numbers in the order of interviews. Their relevant background information is summarized in Table 1.1 to provide context for the findings and specific participant quotes in the following subsections.

Table 1.1. Interview Participants

Participants	Professional Training Background	Job Title	Institution	Approaches
Participant 1	Non-counseling or related degree; career coaching certification	Career Counselor	Private	Career coaching and education
Participant 2	Non-counseling or related degree; career coaching certification	Career Services Director	Private	Career coaching and education
Participant 3	Non-counseling or related degree	Career Services Coordinator	Public	Career education and mentorship
Participant 4	Psychological Counseling and Guidance	Career Advisor	Private	Career advising and counseling
Participant 5	Non-counseling or related degree	Career Advisor	Private	Career advising and coaching
Participant 6	Psychological Counseling and Guidance	Career Counselor	Public	Career counseling

Interview Protocol Development. The survey results (see the findings section) provided a general picture of the status of the career services and helped us invite career development professionals for interviews to create a purposeful sample. In light of the findings from the survey, our research team prepared questions for the semi-structured interviews. Before the interviews, we shared a summary of the survey results with those who responded to the survey and indicated an interest in a follow-up interview. The interviews were conducted by the first author and lasted from 50 to 90 minutes each. They were recorded within an online meeting platform through the first author's official account which is protected by a two-step identity verification process for security and confidentiality of the records.

Data analysis. After the first author prepared the data by transcribing the interviews and organizing them in a shared codebook, we engaged in individual coding before gathering our initial codes together. We followed the six-step guidelines of thematic analysis in psychology by Braun and Clarke (2006). The initial individual coding process was followed by our data analysis meetings where we shared, discussed, and compared our codes, as well as questions or concerns from our reflective memos. This discussion yielded a list of categories by merging some codes and renaming others. After we created a list of categories, we next defined each category and identified related participant quotes to clearly demonstrate the essence of each finding. In other words, this step allowed us to highlight "what aspect of the data each theme captures" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92). At this stage, we were able to use our earlier notes on the possible impact of social, cultural, or economic impact to distinguish the categories. For example, under the category of institutional impact, we found that the participants identified both strengths and challenges or barriers. Our

discussions and contextual interpretation of such categories helped us to clarify each category and identify clear themes in the process.

Finally, we also conducted group meetings to define the themes, summarize their context, and exemplify them with specific participant quotes. This step is also referred to as representing the findings in mixed method designs and can include visuals such as figures, maps, or tables (Creswell & Clark, 2018). In our case, we created a comparison table to present our findings from both study phases during our discussions and writing processes.

Integration of Two Study Phases and Findings

In our study, the integration of qualitative data (interview transcripts) was used to reach a deeper understanding of survey results and explain the career services structures from the perspectives and contexts of career development professionals. We integrated our data analysis according to the key considerations of Creswell and Clark (2018). The first one was a clear statement of the intent of the integration (see the Study Design section above). Then, we described how we integrated data analysis throughout the research process (e.g., using survey findings to create interview questions) and represented the findings in a joint comparison table (Table 1.4.). Finally, we completed the integration process by interpreting the findings in our comparison table and emphasizing the value added by our qualitative explanations, as well as presenting evidence to such value by including participant quotes.

Trustworthiness

Our research team included all four authors with diverse cultural and professional experiences in higher education and career services. Multiple perspectives during the development of our survey and interview questions, consulting and gathering feedback from other experts, and writing and discussing our reflective memos (e.g., consideration of significant vs non-significant contextual predictors) allowed us to minimize threats to trustworthiness, especially validity threats that were most relevant to this mixed-method design. As suggested by Creswell and Clark (2018), we were able to consider diverse perspectives in the context of Turkey by analyzing the data both individually and collectively to identify important survey findings that needed explanation. We also designed our interview protocols and questions by using both expected and contradictory findings from our survey. We addressed dependability, especially in the qualitative data collection and analysis processes in the second phase, by paying critical attention to our potential bias (e.g., having a professional background in and perceived value of career counseling or "KPD" for the first three authors) and working as a team with multiple conversations to share our reflective memos (i.e., notes, questions, concerns about our research) during the data analysis process. Finally, we strived for transferability to other settings. For example, our study had better regional diversity compared to past research although the interview participants were more limited to a major city and relatively larger universities. Having both private and public universities represented in almost equal numbers was another strength for potential transferability.

FINDINGS

The survey results

The results from the first phase of the study, which used a survey, provided a general picture of the 48 university career centers, out of a total number of 53 university career centers that existed at the time of data collection. Corresponding to about 42% of the population, 20 participants fully responded to the survey questions and provided important information about the staff members, structure, and services. According to these results, almost half of the university career centers were in public universities. The responses included information about the training and industry background of 37 career development professionals from 20 different university career centers.

Participant characteristics. Twenty-one professionals had a master's degree while the nine professionals had doctoral degrees. The remaining seven had bachelor's degrees. Thus, about 75% of the career services staff members had graduate degrees. The professional training backgrounds included business (n= 9), psychology (n= 6), psychological counseling and guidance (n= 3), and human resources (n= 2). Other fields included marketing, accounting, statistics, political science, and biology. The administrative job titles included various terminology that reflected management and coordination of the university career centers (n=9). The most frequently used professional title was career counselor (n=9), career center expert (n = 8), and career psychological counselor (n= 1). These titles were followed by education expert (n= 5), educational coordinator (n = 2), and coach and vocational advisor (n= 2).

Services. The participants worked with primarily university students (n= 21), followed by alumni (n= 20) and community members (n= 9) (e.g., high school students, unemployed individuals in the local area). The most frequently provided services are summarized in Table 1.2 below based on the average frequency scores that ranged from 1 (least frequent) to 5 (most frequent).

As shown in Table 1.2., the findings demonstrate that the services are predominantly focused on employment counseling (i.e., facilitating job, internship, and graduate school applications) and career education programs followed by employer relations and networking activities. The career counseling services (e.g., self-exploration or exploration of career options

through individual counseling, group counseling, and career assessments) were the least frequently provided services. We included the assessment of critical student needs (e.g., women and LGBT students' career development needs) and inclusion under career counseling because addressing multicultural and social justice issues is identified as a career counseling competency (e.g., the NCDA minimum competencies for multicultural career development and counseling; NCDA, 2020).

Table 1.2. Survey items and the most frequently provided career services

Categories	Employment Counseling	Employer Relations & Networking	Career Education	Career Counseling
Most Frequent	Support for job application materials ($\underline{X}$= 4.71)	Sharing labor market trends and employment resources ($\underline{X}$= 4.39)	Promotion of career services center information and events among faculty and students ($\underline{X}$= 4.47)	Conducting career assessments ($\underline{X}$= 3.94)
	Job/internship interview preparation ($\underline{X}$= 4.35)	Hosting employers and companies for events where they share information about job application process or internship opportunities ($\underline{X}$= 4.00)	General career development (e.g., career decision-making skills, job application skills) topics ($\underline{X}$= 4.41)	Individual career counseling sessions ($\underline{X}$= 3.82)
	Announcing job opportunities /placement ($\underline{X}$= 4.35)		Seminars to introduce entrepreneurship and related career path options ($\underline{X}$= 3.94)	Group career counseling sessions ($\underline{X}$= 3.18)
Least frequent	Support for college to work transition, employment, and graduate education ($\underline{X}$= 4.22)	Student-alumni meetings and organizing student field trips (visits) at alumni companies ($\underline{X}$= 3.78)	Education sessions about transferable skills ($\underline{X}$= 3.82)	Assessment of critical student needs and inclusion in career services - especially for women, students with disabilities and LGBT students ($\underline{X}$= 2.24)
	Information about legal rights and job benefits such as financial, social, and insurance issues before job interviews ($\underline{X}$= 3.71)		Access to a career library or data base ($\underline{X}$= 2.82)	
			Seminars about academic skills such as effective study and time management ($\underline{X}$= 2.82)	

The alignment of presented student needs and strengths of career services. The survey asked the participants to report up to five areas of their services that they find strongest in ranked order, as well as the top five areas of student needs that are presented as a reason to visit their career services. Table 1.3 is a joint display of these findings to present them in a comparative way. According to these findings, the most frequently presented needs fall under employment counseling such as CV/resume preparation and job/internship search support. The most frequently identified strengths also reflect employment counseling-related activities that align with the presented needs. While the responses are based on the participants'

perceptions, they align with the previous finding on employment counseling being the predominant service area.

Table 1.3. Frequency of presented needs compared to career services strengths

Frequency* of presented needs (f=56)		Frequency* of career services strengths (f=40)	
Employment counseling (f= 30; 53.5%) →	- CV/resume preparation and feedback (f=11; 37%) - job search (f=8; 27%); - interview preparation (f= 6; 20%); - internship search (f= 5; 16%)	- CV/resume preparation (f=6; 35%); - career fairs and networking events (f= 5; 28%); - internship placement (f= 4; 23.5%); - support for transition from college to work (f= 2; 11.5%)	Employment counseling ← (f= 17; 42.5%)
Career Counseling and other direct services (f= 21; 37.5%) →	- Career decision-making challenges (f= 7; 33%); - individual career counseling (e.g., self-exploration needs) (f= 9; 43%); - make a career plan (f= 5; 24%)	Individual and group career counseling (f= 8; 80%); Coaching and mentorship (f= 2; 20%)	Career counseling, coaching and mentorship ← (f= 10; 25%)
Career education (f= 5; 9%) →	Understanding the process of changing majors and graduate education	- Career development seminars (f= 4; 31%); - information about employment and graduate education processes (f= 3; 24%); - career services staff with diverse industry experiences (f= 2; 15%); - academic studies and offering career courses (f= 2; 15%); - offering required training for transferable skill development (f= 2; 15%)	Career education (informative, preventive/ proactive services ← (f= 13; 32.5%)

*The percentages under each area are calculated based on the total number of presented needs and strengths.

On the other hand, it's noteworthy that the most frequently identified strength is "individual and group career counseling" (f= 8). In other words, the highest number of participants perceive individual and group career counseling as their strongest service areas although this is also the least frequently provided service. Furthermore, the frequency of presented needs in the areas of job/internship applications makes sense given the heightened unemployment and underemployment concerns among university students and graduates in Turkey (as discussed in the introduction). While the university entrance exam system that places students into majors at the time of admission may explain the less frequently presented needs in career decision making and other career counseling, the survey findings were limited to have a fair explanation of university student needs from the structure and frequently offered services.

Collaboration with and support from other stakeholders. The final question of the survey explored potential collaboration between career services and other stakeholders. The findings show that other university centers (e.g., psychological counseling center, international education office, academic tutoring center, lifelong education center) (f= 8); student organizations or clubs (f= 6); internal organization or administrative departments (e.g., public relations, information and technology office) (f= 5); alumni relations offices (f=4), and academic colleges (e.g., College of Education, two-year vocational training schools under the universities) (f= 4) are the primary collaborators that support career services. Additional collaborators that the participants connected from outside of their institutions (i.e., external collaborators) are private companies and non-governmental organizations (f= 9), government and professional organizations (e.g., ISKUR) (f= 5), and other educational institutions (f= 3). This list demonstrates the diversity of organizational networks and collaboration within the universities. Given the relatively small sizes of career services teams at some universities (especially, at public universities), one possibility for wide collaboration could be an indication of limited resources, which necessitated further explanation in the second phase of our study.

The second phase of the study with the individual interviews aimed to explain the structure of the career services and emphasis on employment counseling from the perspectives of career development professionals and in the context of how they perceived career services and university student needs in Turkey.

The Interview Results

Based on the survey findings, the interview questions facilitated further reflection on the career services structures, frequently provided services, strengths, and needs from the perspectives of career development professionals. The interview findings provided a more detailed and contextual understanding of the survey findings through an interplay of themes in the form of strengths and challenges at multiple systemic levels (i.e., institutional, professional, or larger systems), which are described next.

Challenges. The commonly shared challenges included five themes: (1) *the limitation of resources and administrative support*, especially at the public universities, where there are also smaller career services teams that struggle to meet the critical student needs. The challenges at the institutional level reflect both physical and vision challenges. For example, Participant 4 explained how they lost their two-story career services building which was at a very central campus location and accessible to their students at the public university they used to work at. Participant 3 from another public university shared the example of losing funding from the university's life-long education center which used to collaborate with companies and raise funds

through their training programs. Although this is also linked to the shrinking professional development budgets of the companies according to this participant's observations, it shows the university's struggle to provide internal funding for the career services, as well as the connection between the impact from multiple systems. Participant 6, on the other hand, provided an example to the theme of lacking relevant and effective administrative support: "the administrators often come from unrelated fields, which lead to a lack of effective and productive activities at the centers. [Our] career center director is not from the career development or counseling field, and a faculty member who is still teaching while focusing on admin issues and meetings with other career centers, but I am not really aware of [his/her] activities."

The challenges at the professional level reflect (2) *unclarity among career counseling, employment counseling, and career coaching modalities*. For example, some activities under employment counseling such as resume creation and review meetings are perceived as career counseling by some participants although they explicitly identify their approach as career coaching. They recognize that most career services are based on time-limited meetings that focus on immediate job/internship search and other employment related needs. Furthermore, to meet the increasing student needs, they look for more time efficient and solution-focused approaches. For example, Participant 1 said: "economic struggles and uncertainty in Turkey did not allow new hires for our career center. We explore ideas about how we can see more students, 30-min appointments, online appointments, etc."

The tendency to provide short-term coaching and advising modalities is also explained by some participants as (3) a *lack of formal career counseling training in Turkey*, especially for career counselors who have expertise about the job market trends and emerging or changing career development needs of university students. For example, Participant 2, who is also a career services manager, said: "our career counselors lack 'know how' and learn case by case due to their limited knowledge about specific industries and job trends". Participant 6 added: "[In Turkey] there are not enough professionals with relevant training and work experience who can meet the career counseling needs of our students. For example, we opened a career counseling master's program but most courses were offered by the faculty with no relevant background. There's a lack of understanding about this field, who career counselors are, and what they do."

The challenges at the larger system-level provide insight into the next theme, (4) *students' challenges in job search and application processes*. For example, Participants 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6 (five out of six participants) explicitly talked about their students' struggle to find job openings from employers that they trust in terms of fair and equitable job application review and interview processes. The students worry about the impact of expected political affiliation, reasonable response time from employers, if any, for their applications, and enduring too many steps in the interview processes. Participant 6 explained: "especially those students who want to work in the government sector have so much anxiety. Even though they have high scores from the government employment and placement exam ("KPSS"), they think they will not get employed unless they are affiliated with specific political worldviews or groups".

Furthermore, the students are reported to face a decline in the number of job opportunities and don't even hear back from their internship applications: "they develop anxiety thinking how much more difficult the job application process will be. They are right". And those students and recent graduates, who get employed in Turkey, report finding themselves at jobs and workplaces where they realize they are not a good enough fit despite the very long application and detailed interview processes. Participant 3 exemplified this challenge:

> "[the graduates] start a job and then quit in a month because they don't like it or they change their mind about a job last minute after they already accepted an offer. I think students have too much stress and are not aware of it. Life stress, exams, anxiety about how to make money. All of these tire them very early and they begin their careers already exhausted. On the other hand, the job market is also very competitive. Some companies have 12-step interview processes."

Participant 5 shared very similar observations about the students' pessimism about job search, as well as lack of job satisfaction under very competitive conditions with inadequate financial and career advancement rewards. They added: "we hear that many positions are being closed and there is downsizing in many companies. This demotivates students. We see more brain drain then, which especially increased in 2017. And not everyone goes abroad to find a job at a global company. They say they can even work at a café in London, for example, just to be away and live a free life. I think this is about the recent situation in Turkey so about the system."

The last theme, the job search and application challenges, was followed by the next theme, (5) *increased student interest and motivation to study and/or work abroad* because of perceived social and economic struggles in Turkey. Participant 1 said:

> "...especially since the latest events [referring to an earlier statement of few back-to-back terrorist attacks and overall governmental interventions that restrict freedoms and worsen the economy in Turkey], the students say they no longer want to stay in this country and explore whether academic career or direct job applications can help them go abroad. Also, since the economic crisis began, there is an increased interest in academic careers. They see it as a better way to go and live abroad due to their hope of being more socially accepted in a new country with a prestigious career or to save time to apply for jobs while in graduate school."

Overall, the challenges explain the high need for career counseling and employment counseling as students and recent graduates are reported to be struggling with finding jobs, application processes, and making a career plan that will lead to systemically fair and satisfactory outcomes. On the other hand, the challenges also demonstrate how career services fall short in meeting student demands due to limited resources (i.e., small team size with limited expertise) and effective leadership support.

Strengths. As seen in the fourth column of Table 1.4., the findings also show six themes of strengths at all three levels. At the institutional level, the first strength was (1) *the organizational support*. However, this strength looked different in private versus public universities. In the private universities, it was (a) *resourcefulness and technological innovation*. It represented primarily a supportive institutional and administrative structure, along with an institutional commitment to career development that strives to reach student groups according to their developmental and contextual needs. For example, Participant 2 explained: "when we meet with career practitioners from other universities, we realize how much more advantage we have due to the support from our university administration." Participant 1 added: "...the former career services director had already established a strong system here including the Simplicity system (i.e., online job application software) before we hired even more team members in the last couple of years. The administration also strives to support our professional development or our requests for more digital tools to enrich our career services".

The theme organizational support was also in the form of (b) *support from faculty, alumni, and student clubs*. For example, all participants talked about receiving support from student clubs and alumni in the form of mentorship programs, student or alumni-organized career fairs, and other networking events. While this finding applies to both types of institutions, the public universities had this strength because of less institutional resources or commitment challenges (which was described in the previous section). Thus, organizational support was mostly voluntarily offered by faculty and alumni with relevant skills and knowledge. On the other hand, this support both reflected and led to the next theme (2) *a holistic vision of career development needs and services*. At the private universities, this holistic vision is explained as the institution's values to support career development proactively by understanding each student as a whole, as opposed to understanding some aspects of their interests as described by assessment scores. It's also explained as helping students to explore both interests and the job market effectively to have career development self-awareness and skills for life. In Participant 4's words: "we [our career services team] believe that students first need to engage in a self-awareness journey to understand what they expect and need from their career. They need to do this through active research and experience. Because they may need to do this again at another point in their life."

On the other hand, at the public universities, the holistic vision was an outcome of career development professionals' idealism and passion despite less organizational resources. For example, Participant 6 described their holistic career development and life planning vision as a connection between "career development and decision that reflect one's true values" and "life satisfaction and overall wellbeing". Participant 6 added:

> "I see and approach career counseling as counseling in its essence… career is a theme that I encounter in the process of psychological counseling. I look more holistically... I observe that students' decision-making processes get easier when they first process difficult emotions and understand their dysfunctional beliefs."

This participant also talked about designing and delivering group career counseling and workshop programs about stress management, assertiveness, and self-confidence, where they also integrate mental health counseling and psychodrama principles. Other supportive evidence to holistic vision included close collaboration with other departments (e.g., counseling and psychological services, tutoring services).

The professional strengths, as also exemplified above by several participant quotes, showed that all participants and their career services centers are aware of and strive for comprehensive career services models, which typically involves career counseling (or other individual and small group meetings), career development, and education events (e.g., resume writing workshop), and employer relations and networking (e.g., career fairs, company visits, networking with alumni). On the other hand, the participants from public universities reported the inadequacy of at least one of these fundamental components. For example, Participant 3 explained:

> "we don't have any career counselors or career counseling activity here, but a pool of alumni who volunteer to work with students individually to review their resumes, cover letters, graduate school application statements, and things like that. [They] also help us as speakers in career education events."

Other participants, including those from private universities, also described how they don't have enough career professionals to meet student needs which makes them rely on their industry connections

and networks in education and business-related academic departments and instructors, and alumni associations. They also tap into their strength of having (3) *diverse professional experience and training background* by intentionally transferring their skills to their current job contexts. They all talked about delegating specific team members for student needs based on their professional training and experience. As exemplified earlier, Participant 6 develops many group interventions and workshops by using their psychodrama background. As another example, Participant 1 also created many group programs by using creativity, arts, and other experiential activities. Participant 3 strategically focused on their background and skills in educational leadership and adult learning to create career education programs for larger groups of students after assessing their needs and securing volunteer speakers or mentors for each program.

As another professional strength, all participants addressed their career development practice with (4) *a recognition of the professional competency boundaries based on their training and experience.* For example, Participants 1, 2, 3, and 5 do not have a professional counseling or psychology training background. Three of these participants identify with career coaching modality, and Participant 5 has a specific career advising title. They all distinguish career coaching and advising from career counseling ("KPD"). Participant 5 said: "if any personal problems come up in our advising sessions, I leave those topics there and go back to career topics in order not to do something wrong. I don't have a psychology background." On the other hand, Participant 4, who has a counseling training background, added: "even though students come to us with career needs, we see that there are sometimes other topics or factors that increase their anxiety. When we feel such possible underlying issues, we help students realize them and consider additional support such as psychological services". As exemplified by also Participant 6 earlier, Participants 4 and 6, who have counseling and related degrees, expressed more clear holistic career counseling practice by recognizing the intersection of personal, mental health, and career needs in their work with students compared to the other participants without counseling or related degrees.

As the next theme, the strengths in larger system levels demonstrate the participants' (5) *collaboration with employers and non-profit organizations* that want to support career development and readiness goals for university students, as well as benchmarking with other university career centers to exchange best-practice ideas. Due to the limitation of resources, the participants rely on and further develop strengths in employer relations, networking, company-initiated career assessment and/or planning tools (e.g., talent assessment programs that lead to internship or job opportunities and individualized career plans to develop further skills specific to industries following a comprehensive online assessment system), and social responsibility projects initiated and supported by alumni associations and other non-profit or non-government organizations. For example, Participant 1 said: "I was able to find an organization where several professionals volunteer their time to create career development support programs for women in business. [This program] helped me develop more services and also create networking opportunities for students." Participant 4 provided another example of collaboration with a large company that shifted their career services focus to talent assessment and development: "We shifted to talent management because the job market is changing and occupations are changing, evolving. We wanted to raise consciousness among students about the importance of skills and competencies."

Table 1.4. A joint display of the integrated findings

Survey Findings	Interview Themes			Mixed-Method Integration and Interpretation
	Systemic Level	Challenges and Barriers	Strengths and Strategies	
The structural focus on employment counseling, employer relations, and networking	Institutional	Student challenges in job application processes and reported job dissatisfaction among recent graduates	Support from faculty, alumni, and student clubs at the public university career centers versus technological innovation at the private universities' career services	The institutions strive to generate their own resources and actively collaborate with other stakeholders to find the most efficient and practical approaches such as career coaching, advising, and mentorship programs to meet the most pressing employment needs as small career services teams.
	Professional	Small teams with a limited career counseling background	Relevant additional training that supports career services	
	Larger systems	Students' loss of faith in the employment system (e.g., perceived discrimination, inefficient interview processes).	Collaboration and benchmarking with other university career services and resourceful companies	
The alignment between frequently presented needs and provided activities	Institutional	Pressing student needs for job/internship search, networking, and graduate school applications	Focus on career education, skill development, and employment	The institutional profiles with pressing student needs align with the urgency of the nationwide unemployment and underemployment problems. Both career services and their industry partners recognize the significance of proactive and strategic career planning that will help students find meaningful employment for long-term life-work satisfaction while also meeting the urgency of short-term employment goals.
	Professional	Lack of formal career counseling training in Turkey; knowledge of the job market and meeting the new generation's needs and interests	Awareness of professional competency limitations; learning career information and resources on a case-by-case basis	
	Larger systems	Students' loss of faith in the employment system and increased interest to work/study abroad	Interest and support from some companies for student career development (e.g., talent assessment and personalized career plans that lead to internships/jobs)	

The conflict between the primary strength and least frequently provided service: career counseling	Institutional	Small career services teams with multiple responsibilities and limited counseling and industry background	Delegation of career services activities according to each team member's professional background and expertise	The results also indicate an unclarity in the understanding of career counseling in the context of very limited career counseling training in Turkey. The interview findings imply that the perceived strength could be the participants' direct work with students through multiple modalities such as coaching, advising, and creative group counseling or other programs. There's a need to better understand what these career services look like and how they align with student expectations given their diverse content in the context of pressing employment related problems.
	Professional	Unclarity about career counseling (aka, "KPD") and employment counseling compared to career coaching, advising, and mentorship; lack of formal career counseling training in Turkey	The vision of holistic career development and life planning needs; clear referral systems	
	Larger systems	Small teams with a limited number of professionals with a career counseling background	No explanation; the need for a larger system recognition and support	
Diversity of organizational networks and collaboration	Institutional	Limited resources and administrative support in the public university career centers; small career services teams with multiple responsibilities	More technological innovation at the private universities' career services; support from faculty, alumni, and student clubs; interest and support from some companies for student career development (e.g., talent assessment and personalized career plans that lead to internships/jobs)	Career services have limited capacity to address immediate employment needs as they strive to meet these needs with both direct student services and collaboration efforts. On the other hand, this challenge leads to reactive services instead of proactive services such as timely outreach to students who don't use the services and help them prepare for university-to-work - including the critical student needs and inclusion in career services - especially for women, students with disabilities, and LGBT students.
	Professional	Small career services teams with multiple responsibilities; focus on short-term and immediate employment needs	Commitment to universal career services models; recognition of the importance of skills development, entrepreneurship, and industry partnerships	
	Larger systems	The lack of established regulations that provide consistent support for career services; students' loss of faith in the employment system	Very recent and still emerging support from the government; the need for a larger system recognition and support	

As the final theme, also at the level of larger systems, the participants identified 6) *the government's recognition of needs in career and employment counseling and* ongoing planning for more services in higher education. One example of this recognition was a presidential order to establish career services centers at all universities, as well as a few national meetings where the higher education council gathered many university career services managers and professionals in a large meeting. Nevertheless, the action plans and consistent communication from this governmental initiative were not reported. For example, Participant 3, who participated in one of such meetings, reported: "...I met the career services managers, coordinators, and professionals from many other public universities in Ankara. Other than a couple of career centers in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, including our center, most others lack career professionals." When Participant 3 followed up for the next steps after the government letters and meetings about the new initiatives, they did not receive a response and further help. As a relevant finding, it is important to note that both Participant 4 and 6 shared their observation and knowledge about the existence of very few career centers that operate under the university president's office ("rektorluk"), and most other centers were established as a research center ("arastirma ve uygulama merkezi"). The participants reported that such research centers are managed by academicians and career services as an additional responsibility for them. In this case, while relevant academic backgrounds and skills provide strength to a few career centers, most others are reported to lack effective leadership and clear vision.

Integrated Findings

Integration is the most important part of mixed-method research designs and recommended to be represented in joint displays followed by an interpretation of the findings (Creswell and Clark, 2018). In this study, the first level of integration was achieved by asking interview participants about the results of the survey. Thus, it was the integration of data collection methods by exploring the same question through multiple methods. The second level of integration was analyzing the data for whether and how qualitative results provide a deeper understanding of the survey findings through multiple researcher lenses. In other words, instead of comparing two different data sets, we determined how the qualitative themes provide additional insight into and nuances about the survey results. Thus, we integrated the findings of the survey and interviews, and represented them in a joint display in Table 1.4.

As indicated in Table 1.4., the interview themes (Columns 2, 3, and 4) provided a contextual and systemic understanding of the four main survey findings (Column 1, Table 1.4.). Integrating these findings led to the mixed-method insights as presented in the final column (Column 5). According to our mixed-method integration, our findings represent the themes at three levels in the context of institutional, professional, and larger systems (e.g., government policies on the centralized higher education system's emphasis on and support for career education and readiness). As described in our study design section, the purpose of this study was to provide a general picture of the status of university career services in Turkey followed by a deeper understanding of them from the perspectives of career development professionals. We represented the findings in relation to our specific aims (see the section, The Purpose of the Study) in Table 1.4. below. Thus, we elaborate on the integrated findings in the next discussion

section in relation to the related literature and emerging career services trends to accomplish our final aim of gathering recommendations and implications for improving career centers.

DISCUSSION

Employment-focused career services structure: challenges and strengths

The primary finding of this study is the employment-focused structure of the university career centers in Turkey. As discussed in the introduction, about 36% of university graduates in Turkey are unemployed (TUIK, 2021) and many are predicted to face increased underemployment based on the lower enrollment of university graduates in professional work areas that require a university degree (Buyukgoze-Kavas et al., 2021). Consistent with the previous studies (e.g., Kara, Güler, Tuna, and Hitay, 2016; Korkut-Owen, 2018; Eraslan-Çapan & Korkut-Owen, 2020) and national statistics, both the survey and interview findings in this study indicate a clear recognition of urgency on employment counseling and related activities among all career services centers that participated in this study. In addition to the pressing student needs and anxiety about job/internship search, the clear emphasis on employment counseling, employer relations, and networking activities are explained by additional contextual factors.

First, although this study did not aim to compare the institution types (e.g., public versus private), the mixed-method insights provide evidence for smaller career services teams (i.e., fewer staff members) in public institutions where each career development professional has more concurrent responsibilities that require greater practicality in each role. While private university career centers in our study samples (e.g., Participants 1, 2, and 5) had larger teams and greater access to technological innovation (e.g., computer-based/online career assessment and planning tools) that helped them serve more students, they still perceive their services falling short in meeting student needs. This finding aligns with the previous studies that found the number of career services and personnel limited compared to student numbers (Zeren et al., 2017; Piskin et al., 2019).

Second, the interviews provided evidence for the limited number of career development professionals with a career counseling background, as well as industry-specific career information knowledge. Furthermore, career development professionals in public institutions seem to have less relevant backgrounds and limited access to training and resources that support career development services. This challenge had a more complicated impact in the case of public institutions (e.g., Participants 3 and 6) where the career center administrators also lack career development and counseling expertise, which is also found in another recent study by Piskin et al. (2019). All participants in our study recognized an important link between effective leadership and clear vision or goals for career services that align with or are supported by the larger institutional administrations.

Third, as a response to the limited resources, expertise, and administrative support, career services structures strive to serve students by using their existing social capital strengths and developing additional strengths through benchmarking and collaboration. This integration finding also explains the diversity of stakeholders and organizations that career services work with according to the survey responses. In the absence of established regulations that provide consistent support for career services from the central higher education system in Turkey, career services centers and their stakeholders (e.g., faculty members, alumni, student clubs, industry partners) recognize the urgency for more employment support. Thus, they create alternative resources and actively collaborate to find the most efficient and practical approaches (e.g., career coaching, advising, and alumni-supported mentorship programs to meet the diverse employment-related needs among students) to be able to serve more students. These efforts align with the previous studies' findings on students' needs and expectations for being supported in their transition to work-life and creating

a career plan (Yerin-Guneri et al., 2016), having more information about employment opportunities (Korkut-Owen, 2018; Korkut-Owen, 2020), as well as the recommended career counseling services (e.g., comprehensive career services that start with needs assessment and cultivate career management skills including the creation of a career plan that integrates changing employment trends, societal needs, and economic conditions; Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2021). On the other hand, the career centers seem to lack sufficient human resources to meet these needs.

The overall employment-focused career services structure that addresses the limited administrative and larger system resources with internal and external collaboration is also consistent with the findings of the previous studies, which showed that employment counseling and related activities such as resume resources, career days, and workshops (Erdogmus, 2001), career fairs and announcing job/internship opportunities (Bacanli, Erisci, & Altunbas, 2009), and career assessments, skill development seminars, and industry/company information (Özden, 2015) were primary services. While some previous studies also found collaboration with companies and other organizations such as ISKUR (Zeren et al., 2017), our study findings indicate more visible and active collaboration efforts as both established and emerging areas of strengths among career services centers. While there's a clear contribution of participant's diverse backgrounds, industry connections, and transferred expertise or skills, we also interpret the active collaboration efforts as a strength that stem from the participants' clear passion for and commitment to career development services at their institutions despite the limited resources and administrative support.

The findings of the structural challenges and strengths also align with the emerging and recommended trends in other countries. According to a widely recognized discussion of the evolution of career services by Dey and Cruzvergara (2019), in our transition to the 21st-century world of work, career services recognized the need for a more integrated model of career services beyond the traditional services of higher education career centers (e.g., job placement and resume/interview preparation). The new models moved beyond career counseling, coaching, career courses, career fairs, and traditionally listed web resources. They emphasized the roles of facilitating, relationship development, and social media as primary methods to build connections and communities and recommend more scalable interventions through systematic integration of academic experience, experiential learning, skill development, and engagement of alumni and employers (Dey & Cruzvergara, 2019). On the other hand, a meta-analysis by Whiston et al. (2017) demonstrated that the role of counselor support remains as a critical factor in making career decisions and the comprehensive career services are still relevant today (Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2021). Thus, the findings of this study show that career services centers in Turkey still fall in a wide spectrum of reactive (e.g., job placement support) to proactive (e.g., career planning) and newly interactive services (e.g., career courses) due to the limited administrative vision and resource capacity that prioritize the most immediate employment related needs. However, given the findings of limited resources and expertise for career counseling or coaching, this insight sheds light on the need to better understand the student needs and whether existing career services structures meet these needs in the context of Turkey.

The survey findings indicated that writing resumes/CVs, job search support, interview preparation, and internship search are the most frequently presented needs, which align with the previous studies (Zeren et al., 2017). These needs are followed by career decision making challenges, individual career counseling needs (e.g., self-exploration), creating a career plan, and understanding the process of changing majors and making graduate education choices, which are also consistent with the previous studies (Eraslan-Çapan & Korkut-Owen, 2020; Korkut-Owen, 2018; Yerin-Guneri et al., 2016). The integrated findings of this study, on the other hand, provided a contextual understanding of these student needs at a more systemic level. All participants in this study observed and reported their students' loss of trust in the employment system (e.g., perceived discrimination in government employment, private sectors' overwhelming interview processes and employment conditions with limited reward), as well as more anxieties about the social, political, and economic circumstances in Turkey as associated with increased interest in applying for jobs and graduate programs abroad. As the participant quotes indicated, the students struggle to find meaning, motivation, and mental energy to persist in job/internship search processes and report decreased hope for rewarding

employment experiences in Turkey, which align with some previous studies (e.g., Gungor & Tansel, 2005; Erzan & Kirisci, 2013; Balin, 2014; Ozdemir & Bellut, 2021). The students increasingly question the decency, fairness, and personal impact of their work experiences as exemplified by the participants' quotes on more frequent job change and international career planning among students and alumni.

This deeper and wider understanding of the student needs show that addressing the institutional challenges and strengths (that are discussed in the previous section in relation to employment-focused career services structures) cannot be sufficiently addressed by only the career services centers or universities. The larger system problems such as the decrease in job opportunities and perceived social, economic, and political problems indicate a need for more holistic and inclusive career development services that support not only immediate employment search activities, but also proactive career exploration and planning that take personal, social, economic, and other larger system influences into consideration to help students make informed choices before long, exhausting job search/application, interviews, and graduate school application processes.

Furthermore, as the integrated findings demonstrate, there is limited recognition of and services for critical student needs and inclusion in career services. While all participants acknowledged these needs (e.g., the career development barriers for women, students with disabilities, invisibility of LGBT student issues, more mental health issues among graduate students), there is not an explicit focus on them. The nature of solution-focused and employment-related career services (e.g., career coaching, mentorship, and the emerging service trends such as the emphasis on experiential learning, skill development, and engagement with the world of work connections) might shadow the diverse career development needs that intersect with personal, cultural, and other wellbeing factors. This intersection is also recognized by previous studies (Yerin Güneri et al., 2016; Işık, Ulubey, & Kozan, 2018; Kırdök & Bölükbaşı, 2018; Eraslan-Çapan & Korkut-Owen, 2020). However, addressing these critical needs seems to be underachieved in the current career services structure. As both survey findings and interview themes explained, the small career services teams that have a limited number of professionals with career counseling or elated background, as well as the lack of formal, credible career development and counseling training in Turkey, are systemic barriers to holistic and inclusive career development services. While the existing strengths in collaboration with multiple stakeholders and industry partners might meet the immediate needs, both career services and their partners recognize the significance of proactive and strategic career planning that will help students find meaningful employment for long-term life-work satisfaction while also meeting the urgency of short-term employment goals. We interpret the interplay of current challenges and strengths, as well as collaboration strategies, which lead to an employment counseling focused structure, a risk for the sustainability of career services support in the long term.

Implications for counseling and advocacy

Based on the integration of findings and their discussion in the previous section, we identified two major implications for advocacy instead of smaller scale implications for career services practices. First, given the lack of established and systemic support for career services in the centrally regulated higher education system of Turkey, the first implication is the need for advocacy at institutional, professional, and larger system levels. While this study, as well as previous studies (e.g., Piskin et al., 2019; Zeren et al., 2017), provide insight about the structural barriers of the institutions, we recommend institutions design personalized needs assessments and program evaluation studies to bring attention to their unique needs among their professional staff and students. Next, with more active collaboration between influential partners (i.e., those who may have a powerful impact on the university administration, as well as the central higher education system), career services centers can demand more structural and consistent resources that will increase the sustainability of career services. As also indicated by Piskin et al. (2019), increasing both the number and expertise of career development professionals is an essential example. While the new

CBİKO initiatives opened new career centers and assigned new administrators, the relevance of their professional backgrounds, expertise, and whether they are assigned as full-time, permanent team members, should be questioned, and challenged by university communities. Furthermore, the allocation of resources for comprehensive online career assessment and planning systems, as well as talent and skill development programs in collaboration with companies, as shared by the participants from private university career centers, can increase access to more students in public universities as well.

As another implication, the university career centers can come together to conduct comprehensive needs assessments among their student and alumni populations to create a profile of regional needs, resources, and strategies for collaboration across multiple institutions. As the findings of this study showed, career development professionals have diverse backgrounds, expertise areas, and varying degrees of social capital, which pose a risk to deepen opportunity gaps among diverse student groups from different types of universities. Besides advocating for permanent resources from the central higher education system, or until those resources can be secured, career services centers can meet the diverse student needs by creating a career services collective in each region. These collectives could address the needs of less developed career services by collaborating on career education programs (i.e., in-person or online workshops on career management skills, job search clubs, individual or group mentorship programs, support groups for those coping with job loss or unemployment related challenges).

On the other hand, supplying these collectives with an adequate number of expert career professionals will remain an issue. To address this issue, psychological counseling and guidance, psychology, human resources, and other relevant academic departments must be supported by the government initiatives and the central higher education system to create qualified and sustainable graduate education and certificate programs in career development and counseling. After supplying the career services centers and regional collectives with enough professionals from such credible programs, they can also become training sites for more professionals through internship and research programs for counselors in training (e.g., career assessment tool design projects).

Finally, increasing the quantity and quality of career services centers alone cannot meet all the student needs addressed in this study and the reviewed literature, especially due to the systemic level barriers such as limited job openings (in relation to limited education and support for entrepreneurship and technological innovation), lack of decent work/job conditions, and perceived discrimination in the hiring processes as several participants shared in this study. Thus, it's crucial for career development professionals and future research to shed light on student experiences, needs, and systemic barriers to inform institutional, professional, and larger system advocates and policy makers about the pressing needs to create decent jobs that align with both local and global demands. Furthermore, students and graduates can be supported through facilitation of critical consciousness development about these barriers, along with effective decision making and self-advocacy skills to meet their basic needs and continue striving for decent work opportunities (Blustein et al, 2021). To avoid internalization of systemic barriers (i.e., the lack of access to decent work) in the overall climate of unemployment, economic, and social-cultural problems, it is crucial to support college students and graduates' active engagement in career development and planning with hope centered approaches (Niles et al., 2011; Yoon et al., 2019).

Limitations and recommendations for future studies

Even though this study used a nationwide survey and strived for a more diverse purposeful sample of interview participants compared to the similar past studies, we reached more insight from those in a major metropolitan area in the qualitative phase of this study. This limitation can also be a result of a smaller number of active career centers at the time of data collection. However, a more recent (and the only other) study that used a nationwide survey (Piskin et al., 2019) was able to reach a similar sample size despite the existence of a much larger population of career services in Turkey since we collected our data. Thus, future

studies can consider different sampling techniques and new initiatives to invite career development professionals to similar research projects. Diversity in terms of both institution types and region is critical. For example, future studies can be more inclusive of higher education institutions beyond the four-year universities. Vocational training institutes and two-year college degree programs should also be examined in relation to career development needs and services.

The current study, as well as most reviewed studies from the literature, reflect the career services structures and needs from the perspectives of professionals. Future studies can explore career services trends, needs, and effectiveness from the perspectives of students. Indeed, closer attention to career services success in the form of actualized goals is crucial. Future studies can collaborate with career services centers to gather data that provide insight into whether students actualize their career plans and goals after using career services such as career development courses, workshops, and counseling or coaching services. Finally, future research should explore the structures and effectiveness of existing, specific career services in Turkey to promote the identification and development of evidence-based career counseling approaches, career planning tools, job/internship search programs, and other related practices.

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Genişletilmiş Özet

Türkiye'deki Üniversitelerde Kariyer Gelişimini Destekleyici Hizmetler: Bir Karma Yöntem Çalışması

Giriş: Türkiye'de üniversitelerde kariyer psikolojik danışmanlığı ile ilgili hizmetlerin verilmesine geç bir tarihte 1999 yılında tek üniversitede başlanmıştır. O tarihten sonra üniversitelerde açılan kariyer merkezlerinin sayısındaki artış yavaş olmuştur. Mezunların işsizlik oranlarının yükseldiği, iş dünyasının giderek karmaşıklaştığı bu dönemde üniversite öğrencilerine kariyer gelişimini destekleyici hizmetlerin verilmesinin önemi ve konuyla ilgili çalışmalar da giderek artmaktadır. Cumhurbaşkanlığı İnsan Kaynakları Ofisinin 2019 yılının sonunda kurulması ile üniversitelerdeki kariyer merkezlerinin sayılarının artması ve kariyer hizmetlerinin desteklenmesi konusundaki girisimlerde büyük bir hızlanma yaşanmaktadır. Ote yandan universite kariyer merkezlerinin yapisini ve ihtiyaclarini ortaya koyan calismalar cok sinirli sayida ve kapsamda kalmistir. Bu çalışmada bu merkezlerde hizmet sunanların bakış açısından kariyer merkezlerinin yapisi, ne tip hizmetlerin verildiği, merkezlerin güçlü yanlarının ve sınırlılıklarının neler olduğunun arastirilmasi ve merkezlerin güçlendirilmelerine yönelik yapılabileceklere ilişkin önerilerin gelistirilmesi amaçlanmıştır.

Yöntem: Bu araştırmada, bir tarama ve anket çalışmasının ardından altı kariyer merkezi çalışanı ile derin görüşmelerin gerçekleştirildiği karma araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. İlk aşamada veri toplandığı sırada web sayfalarına göre aktif olarak çalışan kariyer merkezi sayisi olan 48 üniversiteye araştırmacıların hazırladığı anket iletilmiş, 20 merkezden kullanılabilir veri toplanmıştır. Bu veriler analiz edildikten sonra, bulgularla ilgili daha ayrıntılı bilgi edinmek için ankete katılan ve gönüllü olan altı kişiyle yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ardından bu iki gruptan elde edilen bulgular birlestirilerek ortaklıkları saptanmıştır.

Bulgular ve Tartışma: Bulgular önce ilk ve ikinci aşamadan elde edilen sonuclar olarak sunulmuş sonra karma yöntemin bir gereği olarak bunların birleştirildiği bir tablo uzerinden aciklanmistir. İlk aşamadan elde edilen bulgulara göre merkezde çalışanlarının büyük kısmının yüksek lisans ya da doktora derecesine sahip oldukları, eğitim alanlarının sıklık sırasına göre işletme, psikoloji, psikolojik danışma, insan kaynakları ve diğer alanlarda olduğu görülmüştür. Merkezde verilen hizmetlerin en çok istihdamla ilgili olduğu, ardından işverenlerle ilişkiler, kariyer eğitimi programları ve en az kariyer psikolojik danışmanlığı olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Anketten elde edilen bulgulardan merkezlere başvuranların ihtiyaçları ile verilen hizmetlerin uyuştuğunu, ancak en güçlü yanları olarak gördükleri servisin en az verilen servis olması nedeniyle uyuşmazlık olduğu ve diğer kurumlarla iş birliği yapmalarında çeşitlilik olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Kariyer merkezlerinde çalışanların bu yanıtlarının daha derinlemesine anlaşılması amacıyla görüşmeler biçiminde gerçekleştirilen ikinci aşamadan elde edilen bulgular, kurumsal, mesleki ve daha büyük sistemler (sosyal ve ekonomi politikalari gibi) olmak uzere üç seviyede güçlü yanlar ve zorluklar olarak gruplanarak açıklanmıştır. Anket ve görüşmeden elde edilen bulguların ortaklıklarına bakıldığında merkezlerin kendi olanakları ile farklı kurumlarla iş birliği yaptıkları, kariyer psikolojik danışmanlığı yerine daha pratik bulduklari kariyer koçluğu modelleri, istihtam bilgileri sağlama, mentorluk programlari ve yaratici grup calismalari gibi hizmetler sundukları anlaşılmaktadır. Ulusal olarak yaşanan işsizlik sorunu nedeniyle merkezler bireylerin anlamlı ve surdurulebilir işler için daha stratejik planlar yapmalarını önemsemekmekle beraber daha cok kısa dönemde hizli iş bulma ihtiyacini karşılamaya çalışmaktadırlar. Önemli bir bulgu kariyer merkezlerinde çalışanların kariyer psikolojik danışma kavramlarını farklı biçimlerde kullandıkları ve kavramlarda bir anlam birliği olmadığıdır. Bu biraz da bu konuda verilen eğitimlerin yeterli sayıda olmaması ve farklı alanlardan mezun olanların hizmet vermeleri ile açıklanabilir. Ortak bulgulara bakıldığında merkezlerde yeterli sayıda uzmanın olmaması ve merkezlerin yeterince kaynak desteği almamaları nedeniyle üniversite içindeki ya da dışındaki

kurumlarla iş birliği yaparak bu açığı kapatmaya çalıştiklari gorulmektedir. Bu zorluklar nedeniyle merkezlerin cesitli kültürel kimliklerin (LGBT, engelli, kadin öğrenciler gibi) getirdigi kariyer gelişimi ihtiyaclarin anlasilmasi ve karsilanmasi gibi konulara eğilemediği ve yeteri kadar öğrenciye proaktif olarak ulasamadiklari anlaşılmaktadır.

Sonuç: Elde edilen bulgular kariyer merkezlerinde, calisanlarin ve idari kadronun uzmanligi ve kaynak sınırlılıklarına rağmen dünya genelinde sıklıkla görülen modellerle örtusen kariyer hizmetlerinin verilmeye çalışıldığı anlaşılmaktadır. Bu durum calisanlarin özverili, yaratici ve gonullu kurumlar veya kisilerle iş birliğine dayanmaktadır. Öte yandan, ozellikle kariyer psikolojik danismanlik ve diğer birebir hizmetlerin sinirli kaldigi dusunuldugunde öğrencilerinin kariyer gereksinimlerinin ne olduğunun iyi saptanmasi ve bu ihtiyaçlari karşılayacak daha duzenli, güvenilir ve surdurulabilir kaynaklara ulaşmak önemli görünmektedir. Kariyer merkezi calisanlarinin farkli uzmanliklarini ve becerilerini kullanabilecekleri dayanisma plarformlari kurgulamalari ve cok daha fazla öğrenciye ulaşabilmek için yeni kaynak ve uzun vadeli cozumler (kariyer psikolojik dansimanlik eğitiminin artmasi gibi) talep etmeye devam ederken daha stratejik iş birlikleri ve mesleki ya da alan dayanismasi stratejileri üretmeleri önerilmistir.

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Individuals can access a more comprehensive description of the data files and supplemental resources through the website: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9360-7298 along with a more detailed Turkish summary of the study. We have no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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Etik Bildirim

This research was completed in line with the Helsinki Declaration. In line with this, the study was investigated and permitted by San Francisco State University Scientific Research and Ethical Review Board. Additionally, data tools in the study were only distributed to volunteer participants. All participants provided informed consent. Additionally, participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time during data collection.

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