



Career Expectations of Career Application and Research Center Student Unit Representatives

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Abstract

This study was carried out to determine the career expectations of the student representatives of the Career Application and Research Center. In this descriptive study, a case study design, was used in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data. This study held with 61 university students. The data were obtained with "Career Prospects Scale" which is 5-point Likert-type scale consisting of 22 items. The Cronbach's alpha value for the scale's internal consistency was calculated as .959. The Kaiser Mayer Olkin value was obtained as .875. In the examinations within the scope of construct validity, it was seen that 22 items gathered under three factors explained 55.195% of the total variance and factor loadings ranged from .50 to .867. It can be stated that the sample represents the universe, and therefore correct analysis can be made. And Bartlett's test's value is also significant. According to K-S test results of the scale shows normal distribution. Data analyzed by factor analysis. The findings from the study indicate that gender and the place of education does not play a significant role in shaping the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives. This result has been achieved due to the equal access of Career Center student unit representatives to various activities for career development, such as career planning and career education. But there is a significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to age. According to the test results, 26+ age Career Application and Research Center student representatives are expecting more than 18-25 age student representatives. Considering that 26+ aged student representatives graduated from universities or are about to graduate, it is striking that they are more aware of themselves, their work-life needs from them, and their career expectations. When people's expectations about their careers begin to form, this is the period when they first meet business life, and this period corresponds to the twenties on average. This study holds relevance not only for future employers but also for researchers and Career Centers themselves. The findings shed light on the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives, providing insights that can be utilized to better align organizational practices and resources with the aspirations of students. Moreover, this study opens avenues for further research, encouraging investigations into the career expectations of high school and preschool students

Key Words: Career application and research center student unit representatives, Likert-Type scale, Career expectations

1. INTRODUCTION

Career centers first emerged in the USA and while working with the mission of placing graduates; In our country, it was first established at METU in 1980 as "Employment Office for Graduates", and it was named "Career Planning Center" in 1996 (Bozdoğan, et al., 2022). Today, with the support of the Human Resources Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, Career Centers have started to become widespread in our country; rather than just finding a job, it aims to support individual development, to realize the individual's self, to discover his weaknesses and to strengthen them, to bring them together with the labor market with various activities (such as fairs, trainings, interviews). The activity areas of the Career Center include university students, graduates, administrative and academic staff, starting from pre-university. Nationality, setting standards, accessibility, development, establishing cooperation and partnerships, putting students, graduates, and employers

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at the center of services, integrity and transparency constitute the core values of Career Centers (Bozdoğan, et al., 2022).

The main purpose of all activities of Career Centers is to support individuals and organizations in career planning. With career planning, individuals learn to identify interests, abilities, goals, values, or strengths and weaknesses; they learn to use their abilities/skills by improving themselves (Tunçer, 2012). Career centers act as units that assist university students in providing individual development and enabling individuals to make the right decisions. The positive effects of career planning do not only affect individuals but also provide some organizational benefits (Bozdoğan, et al., 2022). Zunker, 2002 states that after seeing university students graduate, they need to distinguish between career and work very well to make the right decision about work/education and to be sure of the field they want to choose. While work is cultural as “work in any field for a livelihood, occupation”; career was published as “stage, success, and achievement in a profession with time and work” (Turkish Language Institution, 2002). Occupations, while providing the services needed by society, point to both a social and an individual structure by making individuals feel valuable and important to the scope that they are generative (Yeşilyaprak, 2011). Although there are many definitions of career, career refers to step by step and continuous progress, gain experience and increase day by day in a business area where consumers can try to limit (Bayraktaroğlu, 2006).

In this perspective we can see that career development is both for individuals and for the organisations. Individuals' skills, interests, abilities, and expectations are important in career development. Determining the individuals' job perceptions and expectations plays an important role regarding their obligations in the working environment (Hurst & Good, 2009). At the same time determining the expectations and perceptions of students is important for Career Centers, also. Because determining the expectations of students facilitates future career planning and transition from university to business world (Hurst & Good, 2009). For this reason, this study was carried out to determine the career expectations of the student representatives of the Career Application and Research Center. Therefore, this study is important in terms of giving ideas to future employers, career researchers and Career Centers.

1.1. Hypothesis

In this study, it is thought that Career Application and Research Center student representatives career expectations may have an effect according to gender, age, and the place of education. To this end, hypotheses have been established as:

Hypothesis 1

H₀: There is no significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to gender.

H₁: There is a significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to gender.

Hypothesis 2

H₀: There is no significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to age.

H₁: There is a significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to age.

Hypothesis 3

H₀: There is no significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to the place of education.

H₁: There is a significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to the place of education.

2. METHODOLOGY

This descriptive study used a case study design, a quantitative research method, to collect, analyze, and interpret data. The subject or event investigated in case studies is carried out in its natural environment without being controlled or manipulated (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 1999). A likert-type scale was used to collect data.

2.1. Study Group

The scale was applied to 65 Career Application and Research Center Student Unit Representatives. Since it was determined that there were duplicate markings and incorrect data entries in the data from 4 people in the data set, they were excluded from the analysis, and the investigation continued with the data obtained from 61 people. The study group held with 61 university students were chosen to be Career Application and Research Center Student Unit Representatives. The students were selected to represent their departments by their faculty/college/vocational high school. The gender distribution of the study group is presented in Figure 1. The distribution of the study group by age is presented in Figure 2. And the distribution by Faculties, Vocational Schools, and Institutes is presented in Figure 3.

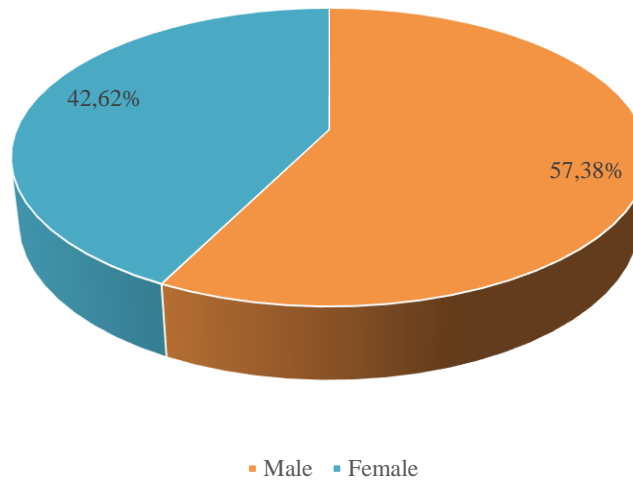


Figure 1. Distribution of Gender

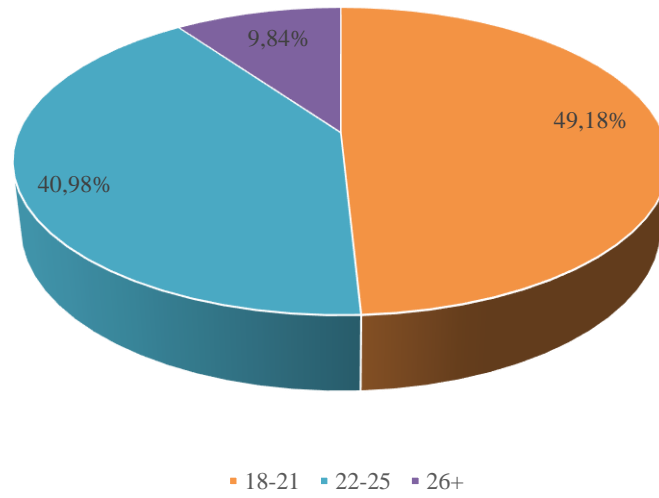


Figure 2. Distribution of Age

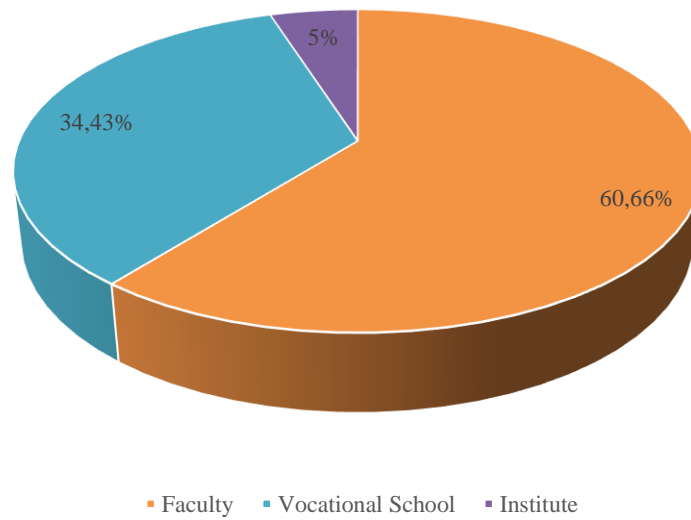


Figure 3. Distribution of the Place of Education

2.2. Data Collection Tool

The data were obtained with “Career Prospects Scale” which consists of 22 items (Kara, Güler, Tuna, & Hitay, 2016). The scale is a 5-point Likert-type expectation scale consisting of “extremely satisfied”, “very satisfied”, “satisfied”, “not satisfied” and “not satisfied at all”. On a Likert-type scale, the extent to which the individual agrees with each statement given states in degrees that he does not agree (Tezbaşaran, 2008; Tavşancıl, 2014). To access demographic characteristics, gender, age, and place of study (faculty/vocational school/institute) were requested from the participants in the Likert-type scale.

2.2.1. Reliability of the Scale

The Cronbach alpha value gives information about the reliability of the scale. While the Cronbach alpha value determined by the researcher (Kara, Güler, Tuna, & Hitay, 2016) was .911, the Cronbach alpha value for the scale's internal consistency was calculated as .959 for this study.

2.2.1. Validity of the Scale

Whether it is correct to perform factor analysis with a data set; if right, how well it is suitable for research is determined by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Test (Kaiser, 1970; Kaiser, 1974). In this study, exploratory factor analyzes were conducted to determine the factor structure of the career expectation scale. KMO and Barlett tests were performed to test the suitability of the data collected from the study group for factor analysis. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis for the scale, the KMO and Barlett's test was performed. The KMO value was obtained as .875. It can be stated that the sample represents the universe, and therefore correct analysis can be made. And Bartlett's test's value is also significant ($p=0.000<0.05$), it can be said that our data set is suitable for factor analysis.

2.3. Data Analysis

To understand whether the data are suitable for normal distribution, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test should be used if the sample is larger than 50, and the p-value should be greater than .05 so that the scores do not deviate excessively from the normal distribution (Büyüköztürk, Çokluk, & Köklü, 2010). According to K-S test results of the scale shows normal distribution ($KS=.491$, $p=.969>.05$). Hypothesis tests were conducted to determine whether there was a difference between the demographic characteristics of the Career Application and Research Center Student Unit Representatives and their career expectations. Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test were used for hypothesis testing.

2.3.1. Factor Analysis

When Table 1 is examined, the expectation level of the 1st factor is 55,195%, that of the 2nd factor is 8,038%; It is seen that the third factor measures 5,593%. In addition, this survey, which consists of 3 factors and 22 questions, measures the expectation level of the students at the rate of 68,826%. Factor 1 is about Educational Quality, Student Relations, Innovation and General Satisfaction; Factor 2 is about Development Services such as Training, Panel, Course, Information, Social Contribution; Factor 3 is about Recognition abroad and finding a job.

Table 1. Factor analysis of the Career Prospects Scale

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	12,143	55,195	55,195	12,143	55,195	55,195	5,695	25,885	25,885
2	1,768	8,038	63,233	1,768	8,038	63,233	5,143	23,378	49,263
3	1,230	5,593	68,826	1,230	5,593	68,826	4,304	19,563	68,826
4	,945	4,295	73,121						
5	,939	4,269	77,389						
6	,726	3,298	80,688						
7	,623	2,831	83,518						
8	,532	2,420	85,939						
9	,499	2,269	88,208						
10	,399	1,815	90,023						
11	,380	1,726	91,749						
12	,305	1,387	93,136						
13	,268	1,220	94,356						
14	,255	1,161	95,516						
15	,196	,890	96,407						
16	,184	,835	97,242						
17	,146	,666	97,907						
18	,130	,592	98,499						
19	,107	,485	98,984						
20	,097	,439	99,423						
21	,085	,386	99,809						
22	,042	,191	100,000						

In the examinations within the scope of construct validity, it was seen that 22 items gathered under three factors explained 55.195% of the total variance, and factor loadings ranged from .50 to .867. The parametric tests applied to the research data are given in Table 1. All test results are given in the findings part.

Table 1. Statistical methods to be used

Variable	Test
Gender	Independent-Samples t-Test
Age	One-Way ANOVA
Place of Education	One-Way ANOVA

3. FINDINGS

The findings obtained from the data analysis are given in line with the purpose of the study. This study was carried out to determine the career expectations of the student representatives of the unit and to examine whether these expectations are met. For this reason, findings regarding the career expectation of the study group in terms of gender, age, and the place of education are presented respectively.

3.1. First Hypothesis Analysis Results (Effect of Gender on Career Expectation)

H₀: There is no significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to gender.

H₁: There is a significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to gender.

Data were analysed using the Independent-Samples t-test to determine the effect of gender on career expectations. The test analysis results are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Independent-samples t-test results about gender

Gender	N	\bar{X}	sd	df	t	p
Male	35	3,479	.798	59	.956	.343
Female	26	3,271	.898			
Total	61					

In this hypothesis, career expectations were measured by considering the gender of the students. According to the Independent-Samples t-test results, it was determined that there was no significant difference between men and women in terms of career expectations ($p > .05$) (Table 2). When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that there was no statistically significant difference at the 5% significance level of the factors determined on career expectations between female students and male students participating in the survey, and the H_0 hypothesis was accepted.

3.2. Second Hypothesis Analysis Results (Effect of Age on Career Expectation)

H₀: There is no significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to age.

H₁: There is a significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to age.

To determine the effect of age on career expectation, the data were analysed using the One-Way ANOVA. analysis results are given in Table 3.

Table 3. One-way ANOVA test results about age

Age	N	\bar{X}	sd	df	F	p
18-21	30	3,696	.808	2	4,920	.011
22-25	25	3,024	.777			
26+	6	3,394	.757			
Total	61	3,391	.841			

In the second hypothesis, career expectations were measured by considering the age of the students. It is found that there was a statistically significant relationship between age and career expectations of Career Application and Research Center Student Unit Representatives according to developmental services and recognition (*p<.05). To show which group the considerable difference originated from, the results of the multiple comparisons Tukey Test were examined. Tukey Test results are given in Table 4.

Table 4. Tukey test results about age

Dependent Variable	(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	p.
Developmental Services	18-21	22-23-24-25	,48383214	,154
		26+	-,67770222	,257
	22-25	18-19-20-21	-,48383214	,154
		26+	-1,16153436*	,025*
	26+	18-19-20-21	,67770222	,257
		22-23-24-25	1,16153436*	,025*
Recognition	18-21	22-23-24-25	,47150861	,174
		26+	1,03039087	,050*
	22-25	18-19-20-21	-,47150861	,174
		26+	,55888226	,411
	26+	18-19-20-21	-1,03039087	,050*
		22-23-24-25	-,55888226	,411

According to test results, in developmental services, 26+ aged group is statistically different from 22-25 aged group; in recognition 18-21 aged group is statistically different from 26+ aged group. (*p<.05). When Table 3 and 4 is examined, it is seen that there was a statistically significant difference at the 5% significance level of the factors determined on career expectations, and the H₁ hypothesis was accepted.

3.3. Third Hypothesis Analysis Results (Effect of the Place of Education on Career Expectation)

H₀: There is no significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to the place of education.

H₁: There is a significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to the place of education.

To determine the effect of the place of education on career expectation, the data were analysed using the One-Way ANOVA test. One-Way ANOVA Test analysis results are given in Table 5.

Table 5. One-way ANOVA test results about place of education

Place of Education	N	\bar{X}	sd	df	F	p
Faculty	37	3,418	.911	2	.053	.949
Vocational School	21	3,342	.781			
Institute	3	3,394	.387			
Total	61	3,391	.841			

In the last hypothesis, career expectations were measured by considering the place of education. According to the results in Table 5, there was no statistically significant difference between the place of education and career expectations of Career Application and Research Center Student Unit Representatives ($p > .05$). It is seen that there was no statistically significant difference at the 5% significance level of the factors determined on career expectations according to the place of education students participating in the survey, and the H_0 hypothesis was accepted.

4. CONCLUSION

Individuals should determine their skills, wishes, expectations, and perceptions while getting to know themselves in the context of their careers. Career Centers must give their students a pathway and our student representatives to decide these skills, desires, expectations, and perceptions. From this point of view, this study was carried out to determine the career expectations of our student representatives.

The first hypothesis was about determining if there is a significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to gender. According to the results, there is no statistically significant relationship between gender and career expectations of Career Application and Research Center Student Unit Representatives.

Throughout the 21st century's first decade, women persisted in encountering an uneven playing field in their professional lives compared to men (Schweitzer, Ng, Lyons, & Kuron, 2011). Hogue, DuBois, & Fox-Cardamone (2010) found that women who have not yet begun their careers generally hold lower career aspirations than men in a similar phase of life. To prevent such disparity, proactive planning is imperative to ensure that both genders can engage in household and family responsibilities while fulfilling their career aspirations (Gilbert, Hallett, & Eldridge, 1994). Opposite of the literature, the findings from the study indicate that gender does not play a significant role in shaping the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives. These results suggest that regardless of gender, students involved in the Career Application and Research Center demonstrate similar career expectations. This outcome highlights the importance of promoting gender equality and inclusivity within educational and professional settings, as it supports the notion that both male and female representatives share similar aspirations and ambitions in their career paths. Similar discourse said by Kahnweiler & Kahnweiler (1992), career planning programs should integrate activities that facilitate the examination of the interconnection between individual and occupational aspirations for both genders. This result has been achieved due to the equal access of Career Center student unit representatives to various activities for career development, such as career planning and career education. Future research could explore other factors influencing career expectations among student unit representatives to understand the dynamics in shaping their professional goals.

The second hypothesis was about determining if there is a significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to age. According to the test results, 26+ age Career Application and Research Center student representatives are expecting more than 18-

25 age student representatives. When people's expectations about their careers begin to form, this is the period when they first meet business life, and this period corresponds to the twenties on average (Agun, Işıluy Üçok, & Aydın Küçük, 2021). This aligns with previous literature emphasizing the challenges associated with managing individuals in their 20s, as this is a critical period when career expectations start to take shape and individuals enter the business world. The study revealed that student representatives aged 26 and above expressed higher expectations than their younger counterparts (aged 18-25). The older age group strongly desired university development services such as training, panels, courses, information, and social contribution. Furthermore, their expectations extended beyond the university, as they sought more recognition abroad and desired better job prospects.

It is known that individuals must first find their own self, which marks the most fundamental stage of career development. Career development is a lifelong process which is referring to positive way of development of the skills to be themselves and at the same time it is a skill which is interpersonal (Keele, Swann, & Davie-Smythe, 2020). By making career development lifelong, an individual can find the real self-concept by exposed to career development. While career development is a long process, an individual can find a chance to have much more than a one-off career conversation about their career decision, they may receive more than one career training that develops their skills. Thanks to these trainings, individuals' soft skills and hard skills can develop. Career development is not only about finding a job fits self-concept of an individual but also maintaining the job that they have and finding a better career path. Being happy with the work they do will not only increase their individual performance, but also contribute to the more functional work of the organizations they have joined. Due to the career development is lifelong, they can observe a profession for a long time or can observe the conditions of different professions. This can help sharpen their perspectives on occupations. In this way, they can realize the skills demanded by organizations and professions and turn towards trainings where they can develop their skills in this direction. In addition, individuals can sharpen their expectations from organizations, professions, and careers by questioning and determining. In our complex, constantly and rapidly changing environment, career education and development support individuals to manage, build and maintain their career development (Keele, Swann, & Davie-Smythe, 2020). Considering that 26+ aged student representatives graduated from universities or are about to graduate, it is striking that they are more aware of themselves, their work-life needs from them, and their career expectations.

These findings highlight the importance of catering to the diverse career expectations of different age groups and tailoring university resources and services accordingly. Further research could delve deeper into understanding the underlying factors contributing to these age-related differences in career expectations and explore strategies to effectively manage and support individuals in their 20s within the context of career development.

And the last hypothesis was about determining if there is a significant difference between the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives according to the place of education. According to the test results, no significant difference was found according to the place of education in career expectations of Career Application and Research Center student representatives. The findings of the study revealed that there is no significant difference in the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives based on their place of education. This suggests that regardless of whether students received their education on the main campus or at a distant location, their career expectations remained similar. One plausible explanation for this finding could be the equal accessibility of Career Center activities for all student representatives, regardless of their educational setting. The Career Center may have implemented strategies to ensure that students from remote locations can still benefit from the various services and resources offered. This finding highlights the importance of providing equitable access to career development opportunities, regardless of the geographical location of the students. Future research could explore the specific

initiatives and approaches implemented by the Career Center to bridge the gap between different education locations and promote equal career development opportunities for all student representatives.

According to the latest OECD report, the global economy has been shaken by the most significant energy crisis since the 1970s and reduced economic growth (OECD, 2022). Therefore, to contribute to economy; it should be among the duties of Career Centers to carry out studies on career expectation more frequently and positively improve career perception. Furthermore, defining and cultivating career expectations is crucial for promoting career growth, which is among the primary objectives of Career Centers. Individuals' positive career expectations can also satisfy their need for self-actualization, the highest level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory. This indicates that career development is a life-long process that starts with individuals getting to know themselves.

One of the primary objectives of Career Centers is to understand and cater to individuals' expectations, facilitating their career development. Consequently, individuals' perceptions and expectations of their future jobs serve as crucial indicators of their anticipations regarding authority and obligations in the workplace (Hurst & Good, 2009). This study holds relevance not only for future employers but also for researchers and Career Centers themselves. The findings shed light on the career expectations of the Career Application and Research Center student unit representatives, providing insights that can be utilized to better align organizational practices and resources with the aspirations of students. Moreover, this study opens avenues for further research, encouraging investigations into the career expectations of high school and preschool students. Understanding the early formation of career expectations can contribute to developing targeted interventions and guidance for students at different educational stages, fostering a seamless transition into their desired career paths. A comprehensive understanding of career expectations can be achieved by broadening the scope of research to encompass various academic levels, ultimately supporting individuals throughout their educational journey and beyond.

Statement of Publication Ethics

The research has no unethical problem, and they observe research and publication ethics.

Conflict of Interest

The study has no conflict of interest.

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