

# Hemşire Adaylarının Cinsiyetlerine Göre Mesleki Sonuç Beklentileri, Kariyer Hedefi Tutarsızlıkları ve Psikolojik İyi Oluşlarının İncelenmesi

## Examination of Nurse Candidates' Vocational Outcome Expectations, Career Goal Discrepancy and Psychological Well-Being Based on Their Genders

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### ÖZ

**Amaç:** Bu çalışmanın amacı, hemşire adaylarının cinsiyetlerine göre mesleki sonuç beklentileri, kariyer hedef tutarsızlıkları ve psikolojik iyi oluşlarının incelenmesidir.

**Yöntem:** 358 hemşire adayı ile yapılan çalışmada, Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Mesleki Sonuç Beklentisi Ölçeği, Kariyer Hedef Tutarsızlık Ölçeği ve Psikolojik İyi Oluş Ölçeği kullanıldı.

**Bulgular:** Hemşire adaylarının cinsiyetlerine göre mesleki sonuç beklentileri ve psikolojik iyi oluşları arasında anlamlı bir fark yoktu (sırası ile  $t_{358}=1.674$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t_{358}=.495$ ,  $p>.05$ ). Ancak hemşire adaylarının cinsiyetlerine göre kariyer hedef tutarsızlığı arasında anlamlı bir fark vardı ( $t_{358}=-2.266$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Buna göre erkek hemşire adaylarının kariyer hedef tutarsızlık ortalamaları ( $X=3.81$ ), kadın hemşire adaylarının kariyer hedef tutarsızlık ortalamalarından ( $X=3.45$ ) daha yüksekti.

**Sonuç:** İleride yapılacak araştırmalarda karma ya da nitel çalışmalar yapılarak hemşire adaylarının mesleğe yönelik tutumları farklı açılardan tartışılabilir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mesleki sonuç beklentileri, Kariyer hedef tutarsızlığı, Psikolojik iyi oluş, Hemşire adayları.

### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study aims to examine nurse candidates' vocational outcome expectations, career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being based on their genders.

**Methods:** Personal Information Form, Vocational Outcome Expectations Scale, Career Goal Discrepancies Scale and Psychological Well-Being Scale were used in the study conducted with 358 nurse candidates.

**Results:** There was no significant difference in the professional outcome expectations and psychological well-being of the nurse candidates based on their gender ( $t_{358}=1.674$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t_{358}=.495$ ,  $p>.05$ , respectively). However, there was a significant difference in the the career goal discrepancy of the nurse candidates based on their gender ( $t_{358}=-2.266$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Accordingly, the mean of career goal discrepancy of male nurse candidates ( $X=3.81$ ) was higher than the mean of career goal discrepancy of female nurse candidates ( $X=3.45$ ).

**Conclusion:** In further studies to be conducted, the attitudes of nurse candidates towards their profession can be discussed from different perspectives by conducting mixed or qualitative studies.

**Key words:** Vocational outcome expectations, Career goal discrepancy, Psychological well-being, Nurse candidates.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Today, gender discrimination in professions has gradually decreased. In many professions that used to be considered for one gender specifically, we can now see both women and men. While nursing was a profession preferred by women in the past, male nurses are also encountered today. Although there is a significant increase in the number of male nurses, it is

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seen that there is still a part of the society who is surprised when they see male nurses. It may create question marks about their careers in male nurse candidates' minds due to social stereotypes. Therefore, in this study, it was aimed to examine nurse candidates' vocational outcome expectations, career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being based on their genders.

Outcome expectations are a key factor to predict career goals (1). Outcome expectation is defined as an individual's beliefs about the outcome of a certain situation and refers to personal beliefs about the outcome of performing a particular behavior (2-4). "Vocational outcome expectations are beliefs about the results of success in specific career decision behaviors and education" (5). It is also defined as "beliefs about the long-term consequences of success that can be achieved as a result of certain educational or career decision-making behaviors" (6).

Vocational outcome expectations are related to Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) which was developed by Lent et al. (1994) and partially based on Bandura's (1986, 1997) Social-Cognitive Theory (7). Particularly the influence of self-efficacy and vocational outcome expectation on people's career performance is emphasized by SCCT (8). In the career choice process, self-efficacy and outcome expectations develop through four sources of information: performance accomplishments, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and emotional arousal on the grounds of personal inputs and contextual factors (9-11).

According to SCCT people develop goals to pursue academic and career-relevant activities that are consistent with their interests as well as self-efficacy and outcome expectations (12). It is emphasized that outcome expectations may be a more powerful predictor of vocational behavior than self-efficacy beliefs for marginalized groups. "students' career possibilities can be constricted at an early age either because their environments offer limited or biased exposure to particular efficacy-building experiences or because they acquire inaccurate self-efficacy or occupational outcome expectations." (11). Therefore, nurse candidates' vocational outcome expectations are very important related to their motivation and career planning. Gender has been accepted as one of the personal factors that have an impact on the development of individuals' self-efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations by shaping their learning experiences (2).

Nursing students need to have many skills such as attention, problem solving, organizing life, setting personal and professional goals, motivating themselves, and developing positive relationships with people (13).

The goals are the internal representation of end states that the individual desire to achieve, maintain or avoid (14). Goal setting and identity creation processes are closely intertwined. And it is central to how young people navigate the multiple career transitions they are faced (15). Goal commitment, confidence, effort, difficulty, stress, and progress are accepted as the six goal appraisal dimensions (16,17).

Career goals are an individuals' expressed career-related goals towards leadership positions, motivation to train and to help and handle others, and interest in continuing schooling (18). From a goal-oriented perspective, once individuals set a goal, they continuously appraise it and the associated striving behaviors by monitoring, consciously and unconsciously, the progress they are making (19). Career goal-performance discrepancy was found to be associated with interpersonal rejection sensitivity, individual career distress, proactive personality, and

employability (20). Career goal discrepancy is defined as the perceived difference between an individual's career goal and the progress made towards achieving that goal (21).

Psychological well-being of nurse candidates as a reflection of vocational outcome expectations and career goal discrepancy is also effective in ensuring the continuity of career decision. Nursing students' mental health can be affected by factors such as meeting strict academic standards, acquiring knowledge and skills, and preparing themselves for different and often stressful professional environments (22). While nursing candidates try to gain the skills required by the nursing profession, they may experience traumatic or stressful experiences as well as positive experiences (23). When nursing students compared with non-medical students, nursing students may encounter more challenges in their life, such as death, negative professional image, workplace violence, etc. (24). Nursing students report very high anxiety, stress, and depression scores, and more stress, anxiety, and depression than students from other disciplines and people in the labor force (25,26). Nurse students emphasized their career as stressful more than other healthcare disciplines students (27). Psychological well-being has an important role in nursing students' mental health and it affects their decisions to enter and remain in the nursing field and successfully adapt to college/university life (28-30).

Psychological well-being is considered an indispensable element for nurses. Because the psychological well-being of nurses can affect patient care, patient-nurse relationship and the health of other health professionals (31). Likewise, the psychological well-being of nursing students is a very important component in the education and development of future nurses (29).

Wellbeing is a dynamic state of mind characterized by reasonable harmony between a worker's abilities, needs, and expectations and environmental demands and opportunities (32). "Psychological well-being is the subjective feeling of contentment, happiness, satisfaction with life's experiences and of one's role in the world of work, sense of achievement, utility, belongingness, and no distress, dissatisfaction or worry, etc." (33,34).

There are studies on psychological well-being of nursing students. For example, a study found that there was a positive relationship between students' perceived social support levels and their psychological well-being (13). Yeh et al. (2016) found that while anxiety, depression and parents' harsh discipline had a negative relationship with the nursing students' psychological well-being, positive personality and family interaction were positively associated with psychological well-being. Male nurses may be less likely to receive social support and acceptance than their female colleagues. Therefore, the psychological well-being of male nurses may be affected negatively (35).

Although there are some studies which focus on nursing students' psychological well-being (13,22,27,29,30,35-39), there is no any study which handle nurses candidates' vocational outcome expectations, career goal discrepancy and their psychological well-being based on their gender.

It is thought that it will be effective for male nurse candidates to train themselves well during their undergraduate education so that they can work successfully and happily after graduation. For this reason, it is expected that their beliefs about professional outcome expectation levels are high, career goal inconsistencies are low, and their psychological well-being is high. In this context, it is planned to propose intervention programs for disadvantaged groups in case of differences that may arise according to the gender variable, by examining the professional outcome expectations, career goal inconsistencies and psychological well-being of

nurse candidates according to their genders. For this purpose, in this study, it was aimed to examine nurse candidates' vocational outcome expectations, career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being based on their genders. For this purpose, answers to the following questions will be sought:

- What are the vocational outcome expectations of nurse candidates?
- What is the career goal discrepancy of nurse candidates?
- What is the psychological well-being level of nurse candidates?
- Do the vocational outcome expectations of nurse candidates differ according to their gender?
- Does the career goal discrepancy of nurse candidates differ according to their gender?
- Does the psychological well-being of nurse candidates differ according to their gender?
- Is there a relationship between the vocational outcome expectations, career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being of nurse candidates?

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Study Design

In this survey research, it is aimed to determine a situation as it exists. The event, person or object that is the subject of the research is tried to be explained in the conditions in which it exists and as it is (40). This study is survey based quantitative research because it was aimed to examine nurse candidates' vocational outcome expectations, career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being without any manipulation.

### Participants

Totally 358 scales which were filled out appropriately were used in data analysis. Participants' background characteristics are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Participants' background Characteristics

Variables	Characteristics	n (%)
<b>Gender</b>	Female	227 (63.4)
	Male	131 (36.6)
<b>Age</b>	20 and below	78 (21.8)
	21-25	271 (75.7)
	26-30	9 (2.5)
<b>Marital status</b>	Married	9 (2.5)
	Single	349 (97.5)
<b>Grade Level</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Grade	109 (30.4)
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Grade	130 (36.3)
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade	75 (20.9)
	4 <sup>th</sup> Grade	44 (12.3)
<b>Place of Residence</b>	City	274 (76.5)
	Village	84 (23.5)
<b>Did you choose your career voluntarily</b>	Yes	212 (59.2)
	No	146 (40.8)
<b>Why did you choose nurse as career</b>	High probability of getting a job	241 (67.3)
	Because I love	65 (18.2)
	Because it's a prestigious job	18 (5.0)
	Other	34 (9.5)

As seen in Table 1, more than half of the participants were women and most of them were between the ages of 21-25. Only 9 nurse candidates were married. More than half of the participants were first- and second-year students. About three quarters of the participants live in the city. More than half of the participants chose their careers willingly. Also, more than half of the participants stated that they chose their career because of the high probability of getting a job.

### **Instruments**

Personal Information Form, Vocational Outcome Expectations Scale, Career Goal Discrepancies Scale and Psychological Well-Being Scale were used as data collection tools in this research.

*Personal Information Form:* It includes personal information such as gender, age, marital status, grade level, place of residence, did you choose your career voluntarily, why did you choose nurse as a career.

*Vocational Outcome Expectations Scale:* This 12-item scale, measures people's beliefs about the long-term consequences of success that can be achieved as a result of certain educational or career decision-making behaviors. Likert-type scale is answered as totally agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), strongly disagree (1). The scores that can be obtained from the sum of the scale items without an inverse item range from 12 to 48. As the scores obtained from the scale increase, the expectation of professional results also increases. As a result of Exploratory and Confirmatory factor analysis of the scale, which was adapted into Turkish by Işık (2010), it was found 42% of the total variance. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .87 (41).

*Career Goal Discrepancies Scale:* The scale developed by Creed and Hood (2015) was adapted into Turkish by Yam, Alkın, and Barut (2020). The adaptation study was carried out with 207 university students. The class levels of the participants ranged from 1 to 4. In order to test whether the Turkish version of the scale measures in a distinctive way, the independent groups t-test was used to examine whether the difference between the lower-upper group mean scores of 27% was significant or not. As a result, it has been revealed that the scale has distinctive features. Cronbach's Alpha internal reliability coefficient ( $\alpha=.92$ ) was calculated for the reliability analysis of the scale (42).

*Psychological Well-Being Scale:* The scale was developed by Diener et al. (2009; 2010) to measure socio-psychological well-being as a complement to existing well-being measures. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was done by Telef (2011; 2013) (43,44). All positively expressed items on the scale are answered between 1 and 7, as I strongly disagree (1) to I strongly agree (7). A high score indicates that the person has many psychological resources and strengths. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, the total explained variance was found as 42%. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient obtained in the reliability study of the scale was .80 (44).

### **Data collection process**

The sample of this survey study, which was carried out between 24.03.2023 and 02.05.2023, consisted of 358 nurse candidates. All data collection tools have been transferred to the online google form to collect data in an easier and more environmentally friendly way.

After the purpose of the study was explained to the nurse candidates studying in the nursing department in line with the ethical permission obtained from XXX University (decision no: 2023/03-10, dated 17/03/2023), the consent form was signed by the nurse candidates who would voluntarily participate in the study. Then, they were given a google form link and asked to fill it out.

### Data Analysis

*Sample size calculation:* According to previous study (45), it was observed that standard deviation for Professional Outcome Expectation Scale value ranged from 0.79 to 0.98. Thus, in this study, standard deviation was taken as 0.85 for Professional Outcome Expectation Scale value. In addition, for the 0.05 type I error rate, Z value and effect size were assumed to be 1.96 and 0.09, respectively. Based on this information and according to the equation of sample size calculation ( $n = Z^2 \sigma^2 / d^2$ ), the minimum sample size was found 343. By considering unexpected conditions during the experiment, about 5% extra individuals were included into study. Thus, the survey was conducted with 358 individuals. Assumptions required for the use of parametric tests have been tested. As related to normal distribution, the skewness and kurtosis values of the scores were calculated. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test's results showed that data were distributed normally ( $n=358, p > 0.05$ ). As a result of this analysis, parametric tests were used. Descriptive statistics for the continuous variables were presented as Mean, Standard deviation, minimum and maximum values while count and percentages for categorical variables. After the descriptive statistics were calculated, independent-samples t-testing was used to make comparisons between two groups' variables. Pearson correlation analysis was used to examine the relationships between vocational outcome expectations, career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being of nurse candidates. Statistical significance level was considered as 5% and SPSS (ver: 21) statistical program was used for all statistical computations.

### 3. RESULTS

#### *What are the vocational outcome expectations of nurse candidates?*

Considering the lowest 12 and the highest 48 points that can be obtained from the Vocational Outcome Expectation scale, it can be said that the professional outcome expectations of the nurse candidates are at a moderate level, since their mean score is 32 (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Participants' Descriptive Statistics Related to Vocational Outcome Expectation, Career Goal Discrepancy and Psychological Well-Being

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
<b>Vocational Outcome Expectation</b>	358	12	48	32.85	6.1
<b>Career Goal Discrepancy</b>	358	12	84	43.04	17.1
<b>Psychological Well-Being</b>	358	8	56	39.25	9.71

*What is the career goal discrepancy of nurse candidates?*

Considering the lowest 12 and the highest 84 points that can be obtained from the Career Goal Discrepancy scale, it can be said that Career Goal Discrepancy of the nurse candidates are at a moderate level, because their mean score is 43 (Table 2).

*What is the psychological well-being level of nurse candidates?*

Considering the lowest 8 and the highest 56 points that can be obtained from the Psychological Well-Being scale, it can be said that Psychological Well-Being of the nurse candidates are at a moderate level, because their mean score is 39 (Table 2).

*Do the vocational outcome expectations of nurse candidates differ according to their gender?*

Independent-samples t-tests conducted to compare Vocational Outcome Expectations of nurse candidates based on their gender. Analysis showed that there is not a significant difference based on their gender ( $t_{358}=1.674, p>.05$ ). (Table 3).

*Does the career goal discrepancy of nurse candidates differ according to their gender?*

Independent-samples t-tests conducted to compare career goal discrepancy of nurse candidates based on their gender. Analysis showed that there is a significant difference based on their gender ( $t_{358}= -2.266, p<.05$ ). The mean of career goal discrepancy of male nurse candidates ( $X=3.81$ ) were higher than the mean of career goal discrepancy of female nurse candidates ( $X=3.45$ ). (Table 3).

*Does the psychological well-being of nurse candidates differ according to their gender?*

Independent-samples t-tests conducted to compare psychological well-being of nurse candidates based on their gender. Analysis showed that there is not a significant difference based on their gender ( $t_{358}=.495, p>.05$ ). (Table 3).

**Table 3.** t-test Results of Vocational Outcome Expectations, Career Goal Discrepancy and Psychological Well-Being of Nurse Candidates Based on Their Gender

	Gender	n	$\bar{X}$	Sd	t	p
<b>Vocational Outcome Expectations</b>	Female	227	2.77	.47	1.674	.095
	Male	131	2.67	.56		
<b>Career Goal Discrepancy</b>	Female	227	3.45	1.47	-2.266	.024
	Male	131	3.81	1.36		
<b>Psychological Well-Being</b>	Female	227	4.93	1.18	.495	.621
	Male	131	4.86	1.27		

*Is there a relationship between the vocational outcome expectations, career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being of nurse candidates?*

The relationships between vocational outcome expectations, career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being of nurse candidates, were examined by Pearson correlation analysis, showed significant differences. A negative significant relationship was found between vocational outcome expectations and career goal discrepancy ( $r=-.460, p<.01$ ). In other words, it can be said that if the vocational outcome expectations of nurse candidates increase, their

career goal discrepancy will decrease. A positive and significant relationship was found between vocational outcome expectations and psychological well-being ( $r=.537, p<.01$ ). It can be said that if the vocational outcome expectations of nurse candidates increase, their psychological well-being will also increase. In addition, a significant negative relationship ( $r=-.382, p<.01$ ) was found between career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being of nurse candidates. In other words, it can be said that if the career goal discrepancy of nurse candidates increases, their psychological well-being will decrease (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Relationships Among the Vocational Outcome Expectations, Career Goal Discrepancy and Psychological Well-Being of Nurse Candidates

Variables	1	2	3
1. Vocational outcome expectations	1	-.460**	.537**
2. Career goal discrepancy		1	-.382**
3. Psychological well-being			1

\*\* $p < .01$

#### 4. DISCUSSION

It has been determined that the professional outcome expectations of the nurse candidates are at a moderate level. Of course, it is preferred that nurse candidates have high professional outcome expectations. However, although they have acquired the necessary knowledge and experience to be able to do the nursing profession during their undergraduate education, they need to work in a job in order to use this knowledge and skills in the future. In the past, it was much easier to work as a nurse in public hospitals in Turkey. In recent years, job placement is made according to the score obtained from the central exam. Therefore, candidates who do not get a high enough score may wait a few years. It is thought that this situation has an effect on the professional outcome expectations of nurse candidates at a moderate level.

It has been determined that Career Goal Discrepancy of the nurse candidates are at a moderate level. It is desirable that the career goal discrepancy is low. However, there may be different reasons why nurse candidates' career goal discrepancy was moderate in current study. An ideal nursing figure is drawn in the training they have received during their undergraduate education. When they compare themselves with this ideal nursing figure, it is thought that they could see themselves inadequate in some subjects, so this situation may be effective in that result.

It has been determined that Psychological Well-Being of the nurse candidates are at a moderate level. The range of 41-56 points to be taken from the scale is considered high. Although the average of nurse candidates is close to 41, it can be said that they have a moderate level of psychological well-being. In this study, it is a pleasing result that the psychological well-being of the nurse candidates ( $\bar{x}=39.25$ ) was close to high. Because it is known that individuals with high psychological well-being are more productive, more successful, and have better motivation and communication skills. The nursing profession is a very important profession among the professions that work with people, and they have a critical role in the recovery of sick individuals. Therefore, it is thought that the psychological well-being of nurse candidates can be an important indicator in fulfilling their profession properly.



There is no significant difference in the professional outcome expectations of the nurse candidates based on their gender. It is thought that both male and female nurse candidates have similar professional outcome expectations. Because nurse candidates of both genders start their career according to the scores they get from the central exam and they will have the same wages and working conditions, there is no difference between them.

There is no significant difference in the psychological well-being of the nurse candidates based on their gender. Although Yıldırım et al. (2021) determined that the psychological well-being of female nursing students is higher than that of male nursing students, some other studies, there is no significant difference in the mean score of psychological well-being among the male and female nurses (33). Aydın et al. (2017) found a statistically significant difference in the subscale of *positive relationships with others* by gender (13). Female nursing students were in positive relationships with others more than the male nursing students. It can be said that both female and male nurse candidates have positive and negative similar experiences and expectations in the emergence of this result.

The mean of career goal discrepancy of male nurse candidates was higher than the mean of career goal discrepancy of female nurse candidates. Although there are many male nurses in the nursing profession, which has been seen as a female profession for years, there is still a confusion in the society. Male teacher candidates may have question marks about whether their profession is suitable for them due to the reactions of people in the society. In this case, it can be said that it increases their career goal discrepancy.

A negative significant relationship was found between vocational outcome expectations and career goal discrepancy. This finding is in line with the statements about vocational outcome expectations and career goal discrepancy. Because while career outcome expectations are positive, career goal discrepancy is negative. If nurse candidates have high vocational outcome expectations, it is expected that they have positive expectations related to their careers, and in this case, their career goal discrepancy will be low.

A positive and significant relationship was found between vocational outcome expectations and psychological well-being. This finding is also consistent with the explanations in the literature about vocational outcome expectations and psychological well-being. Because both vocational outcome expectations and psychological well-being reflect positive situations. The high vocational outcome expectations of nurse candidates increase the likelihood of their psychological well-being.

In addition, a significant negative relationship was found between career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being of nurse candidates. In other words, it can be said that if the career goal discrepancy of nurse candidates increases, their psychological well-being will decrease. This finding is in accordance with the explanations about career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being in the literature. If the career goal discrepancy of nurse candidates increases, it is expected that their psychological well-being will be negatively affected.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study has some limitations. For example, in this study, data were collected with quantitative data collection tools. In further studies to be conducted, the attitudes of nurse candidates towards their profession can be discussed from different perspectives by conducting

mixed or qualitative studies. In further studies, the vocational outcome expectations, career goal discrepancy and psychological well-being of male and female nurses can be compared. Intervention programs can be arranged for male nurse candidates with higher career goal discrepancy. Also, this intervention programs' effect can be tested.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The necessary ethics-committee approval was obtained Van Yüzüncü Yıl University.

### **Conflict of Interest**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

## **KAYNAKLAR**

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