

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article



Geleceğin Kahramanları: Yaşlı Bakım Tekniker Adaylarının Kariyer Tutumları

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ÖZET

Amaç: Bu araştırma, Yaşlı Bakımı Bölümü'nde öğrenim gören öğrencilerin kariyer geleceği ve geleceğe yönelik tutumlarının incelenmesi, bu konuda gerçekleştirilen çalışmanın etkinliğini değerlendirmek amacıyla yapılmıştır.

Gereç Yöntemler: Araştırmayı örneklemi 90 sağlık hizmetleri meslek yüksekokul yaşlı bakımı bölümü öğrencisi (yaş ortalaması; $20,28 \pm 1,89$ yıl) oluşturmuştur. Öğrencilere yönelik kariyer ve mesleklerinin geleceği ile ilgili bir çalıştaya katılım gösteren öğrencilerin, kariyerleri ile ilgili tutumları 'Kariyer Geleceği Ölçeği' ile gelecek beklenileri ise 'Geleceğe Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği' ile çalıştaya katılmıştır. İki grup arasındaki ölçüm değerlerinin karşılaştırılmasında bağımsız gruptarda t testi, ikiden fazla grupta ölçüm değerlerinin karşılaştırılmasında tek yönlü varyans analizi kullanılmıştır.

Bulgular: Öğrencilerin %71'i meslek tanımını bildiğini belirtmiştir. Öğrencilerin eğitim sonrası mesleğe yönelik bilgi düzeyi sonuçları genel olarak artmıştır. Kız öğrencilerde Geleceğe Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği puanları eğitim sonrasında anlamlı bir şekilde artmıştır ($p:0,005$). Sınıflara göre incelemiştir hem 1. sınıf ($p:0,043$) hem de 2. sınıf ($p:0,017$) öğrencilerinin eğitim sonrası Geleceğe Yönelik Tutum Ölçeği puanları anlamlı bir şekilde artış göstermiştir (öncesi/sonrası toplam puan $88,74/93,84$). Bütün öğrencilerin Geleceğe Yönelik Tutum ve Kariyer Geleceği Ölçeği (öncesi/sonrası toplam puan $99,34/102,06$) puanları incelenmiştir eğitim sonrasında anlamlı artış görülmüştür ($p:0,002$, $p:0,022$).

Sonuç: Bu çalışmanın sonuçları öğrencilerin meslek ve kariyerleri ile ilgili verilen bir eğitimden kariyer ve geleceğe yönelik düşünce ve tutum üzerinde olumlu bir etkisinin olduğunu göstermektedir. Öğrencilerde mesleki kaygıların giderilmesi, kariyerlerini daha iyi şekillendirebilmeleri ve geleceğe daha güvenli bakımları için öğrencilere yönelik bu konuda eğitimlerin düzenlenmesi, ders müfredatlarına 'Kariyer Planlaması' gibi temaların eklenmesi faydalı olabilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kariyer, Gelecek beklenisi, Yaşlı bakımı

The Heroes of the Future: Career Attitudes of Prospective Geriatric Care Technicians

ABSTRACT

Aim: This research aimed to examine the career future and attitudes towards the future among students in the Department of Elderly Care and to evaluate the effectiveness of a workshop organized on this topic.

Material and Methods: This cross-sectional study included 90 students from a health services vocational high school's elderly care department (mean age: 20.28 ± 1.89 years). A workshop was organized for these students focusing on their careers and the future of their profession. The students' career attitudes were assessed using the "Career Future Scale," and their future expectations were evaluated with the "Future Attitude Scale" both before and after the workshop. A dependent samples t-test was used to compare measurement values between two groups, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed for comparisons involving more than two groups.

Results: Seventy-one percent (71%) of the students reported knowing the definition of their profession. Overall, students' knowledge about the profession showed a general increase after the training. Female students' Future Attitude Scale scores significantly increased after the training ($p: 0.005$). When analyzed by grade level, Future Attitude Scale scores of both 1st-grade ($p: 0.043$) and 2nd-grade ($p: 0.017$) students significantly improved after the training. A significant increase was observed in all students' Future Attitude Scale scores (before/after total score: $88.74/93.84$) and Career Future Scale scores (before/after total score: $99.34/102.06$) after the training ($p: 0.002$ and $p: 0.022$, respectively).

Conclusion: The results of this study indicate that providing education to students about their profession and career positively influences their career and future perceptions and attitudes. It may be beneficial to organize similar training sessions for students to alleviate professional concerns, facilitate better career planning, and enable them to approach the future with greater confidence. Additionally, integrating themes such as "Career Planning" into course curricula could be valuable.

Keywords: Career, Future attitude, Elderly care

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INTRODUCTION

The increasing global elderly population, as highlighted by the United Nations (2019) and IHME (2018), is also evident in Turkey, where the elderly population rose to 9.5% in 2020 and is projected to increase further (TUIK 2024). This demographic trend is driving a growing need for elderly care professionals, particularly elderly care technicians who are crucial for providing direct care (Benli and Acar 2017). The establishment of 'Healthy Aging Centers' by the Ministry of Health is expected to amplify this demand. Ensuring high-quality care necessitates a multidisciplinary approach (Meydan 2020), and elderly care technicians are vital in this context. Furthermore, their role in enhancing the quality and sustainability of home care services is increasingly recognized (İlce and Kuzay 2023).

Elderly care technicians find employment opportunities in both public and private healthcare institutions. Graduates of elderly care programs can also vertically transfer to undergraduate programs such as nursing, dietetics, physiotherapy, and rehabilitation through the Vertical Transfer Exam. However, the lack of clear professional definitions for elderly care technicians among other healthcare professionals leads to difficulties in their practice. Students may lack sufficient clarity regarding the positions they can hold after graduation, the specialization areas they can pursue, and how they can sustain their professional development. This situation can diminish students' motivation, negatively impact their engagement in the educational process, and lead to uncertainty in their post-graduation job search. Limited job descriptions, professional confusion within healthcare institutions, and insufficient information about completing undergraduate studies contribute to a negative attitude towards the profession. Some research conducted specifically in Turkey (Kaya and Yilmaz 2015) reveals that the job descriptions of elderly care technicians vary across different healthcare and social service organizations, and this situation creates difficulties in ensuring uniformity of practice. To ensure that graduates become confident and well-equipped professionals, the quality of theoretical and practical

education they receive at school and the opportunity to practice in the best environments are crucial. In this regard, it is necessary to identify the problems, concerns, and expectations that students encounter during their practical experiences (Kaysi and Aydemir 2018).

Career planning is defined as the process of self-assessment to identify one's strengths and areas for improvement, setting career expectations and goals aligned with one's knowledge, skills, and interests, and developing action plans to achieve these goals. Choosing a profession that aligns with one's own abilities and desires is the most crucial stage of career planning (Birinci 2021). Many countries struggle with healthcare workforce planning due to shortages or surpluses of health professionals, and the distribution of graduates' career choices often fails to meet the demands of healthcare services. To provide better career guidance and consequently achieve more effective workforce planning and more efficient management of healthcare resources, more information is needed about the factors influencing the career choices of students and graduates. While many students begin university with a specific career choice, the knowledge they acquire during their education – in whatever form – influences the evolution of this choice throughout their working lives. Biographical characteristics such as gender, personal experience in healthcare, and parents' medical history play a role in this (Cooper 2004; Kuhnigk et al., 2007). Individual characteristics, the perceived benefits of the profession, salary, and academic achievement are also associated with career choice, and clinical internship experiences play a role in students' career planning (Soethout et al., 2008). Recent shifts in culture, health, national policy, and privatization, alongside significant generational differences, have led to changes in the career choices of elderly care students. Today's youth are observed to choose careers based on increasing employment opportunities and better pay criteria (Jamieson et al., 2015; Chung and Fitzsimons 2013). Efforts are underway across all employment sectors to adapt education and work environments to accommodate generational differences. Understanding Generation Z's post-graduation plans,

their preferred workplaces, and the factors influencing their choices is crucial for determining the future of the workforce and educational programs (Chung and Fitzsimons 2013). However, the literature concerning the post-graduation work areas of elderly care students is quite limited. Although many educators suggest that students prefer less demanding fields and discuss generational differences, there are few studies on the characteristics of Generation Z and the impact of these characteristics on their work choices, with existing studies often focusing on reasons for leaving jobs (Shoqirat and Abu-Qamar 2015; Rudman et al., 2014). In Turkey, research in this area is limited. It is important to align the elderly care curriculum with the needs and preferences of Generation Z students, provide realistic career guidance in clinical settings, and thus develop strategies to reduce turnover rates and improve the quality of care (Chung and Fitzsimons 2013). Designing working conditions that meet the expectations of future elderly care technicians and retain them in their profession is essential. Hospitals, nursing homes, and other employers can utilize the findings of this research to attract and retain the new generation of elderly care students. Anticipating the preferences of this generation and the factors influencing them is of great importance for developing future roadmaps, not only at the national level but also internationally. Based on all of this, this study aims to determine the career expectations and future attitudes of prospective elderly care technicians, the factors influencing these, and the impact of a career planning workshop on students' career expectations and future attitudes.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Study Design

This cross-sectional, descriptive study included 90 students from the Vocational School of Health Services at a university. The study was planned to evaluate the effectiveness of a workshop designed to examine the career futures and attitudes of students in the Department of Elderly Care.

Population and Sample

The study was conducted with students (N=130) enrolled in the Elderly Care Department of a Health Services Vocational School. A one-day workshop, held in four sessions, was organized for these students. It featured guest speakers, all of whom were elderly care graduates working in various fields (e.g., association presidents, hospital administrators, academics), who provided information to the students. Necessary information and announcements regarding the workshop were shared with the students.

The workshop itself was structured into four sessions, with three speakers presenting in each. The first session focused on global and national practices in elder care, along with the significance of elderly care technicians. The second session included presentations on the professional definitions of elderly care technicians, their appointment status, and professional association processes. In the third session, presentations covered employment opportunities for elderly care technicians in institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, and municipalities. The final session featured professional experience and career insights shared by elderly care graduates working in academia, private care centers, and state hospitals under the Ministry of Health.

Before the workshop began, a data collection form was distributed to the students, and they were asked to complete it. At the conclusion of the workshop, the same data collection form was distributed again, and students were requested to complete it. A large majority of the students participated in the workshop (69.2%). Students who attended the workshop, agreed to participate in the study, and completed the research form in full were included. The sample for the study ultimately consisted of 90 students from the health services vocational high school's elderly care department.

Data Collection Tools

The data collection form consisted of three main parts: a Sociodemographic Information Form, the Career Future Scale, and the Future Attitude Scale. Necessary permissions for using the scales were obtained.

Sociodemographic Information Form

This form included information about the students (e.g., age, gender, reason for choosing the department), general sociodemographic details, and questions related to their profession's description and their career plans. The form was developed by the researcher through a literature review (Birinci 2021; Bodur 2020; Kara and Yilmaz 2015).

The Career Future Scale

Developed by Rottinghaus et al. (2017) and adapted into Turkish by Kalafat in 2012, this scale was used to assess individuals' positive career planning attitudes. The scale comprises 25 items across three sub-dimensions: career congruence, career prospect, and perceived knowledge of the job market. It is answered on a 5-point Likert scale. The Cronbach's alpha value for the scale is 0.716 (Kalafat 2012; Rottinghaus et al., 2017).

The Future Attitude Scale

Developed by Bodur and Harmancı Seren (2020) to assess individuals' future attitude, this is a 5-point Likert-type scale. The scale consists of 21 items, all positively worded. The scale score is calculated as the average of the item scores, with a total possible score ranging from 1 to 5. Low scores on the scale indicate a negative future attitude, while high scores indicate a positive future attitude. The Cronbach's alpha value for the scale is 0.91 (Bodur and Seren 2020).

Ethics statement

Ethical approval for the study was obtained on January 17, 2024, from the XXX University Clinical Research Ethics Committee, with decision number 2183. Our study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki.

Statistical Analysis

Data was analyzed using IBM SPSS 21 (SPSS Inc. Chicago, IL, USA). The demographic data and scale scores of the research group were determined as minimum and maximum values, mean, standard deviation, and percentage distributions, according to the data structure. The normality of the variables was determined by Kolmogorov test and visual inspection of histograms. The distribution was normal ($p<0,05$). The existence of differences between groups was analyzed using independent samples t-test/Mann Whitney-U tests for normally distributed data and paired samples t-test/Wilcoxon tests for non-normally distributed data.

RESULTS

Ninety students studying at a Health Services Vocational School of a university participated in this cross-sectional descriptive study. The students' average age was 20.28 years, and 78% were female. While 9% of the students had graduated from another associate's degree program, 47% stated that job opportunities were the primary reason for choosing their current program (Table 1). When their income levels were evaluated, 53.3% of the students reported that their income exceeded their expenses. When asked why they chose the department, 46.7% stated they chose elderly care technician because of its job opportunities. Regarding their awareness of the professional definition, 78.9% indicated they were aware. The demographic data of the participants are given in Table I.

Table I. Sociodemographic Characteristics of the Participants

n:90	Total
Age (year) (X±SS)	20.28±1.89
Gender n (%)	
Female	70 (77.8)
Male	20 (22.2)
Grade level n (%)	
First year	42 (46.7)
Second year	48 (53.3)
Income Level n (%)	
Income equals expenses	35 (38.9)
Income exceeds expenses	7 (7.8)
Income is less than expenses	48 (53.3)
High School Graduation	
Health Vocational High School	38 (42.2)
Vocational High School	12 (13.3)
Anatolian Technical High School	34 (37.8)
Other	6 (6.7)
Graduated from Another Department n (%)	
Yes	8 (8.8)
Medical Documentation and Secretarial	2 (28.6)
Emergency Medical Technician	1 (14.3)
Other	5 (57.2)
No	82 (91.2)
Social Security n (%)	
Yes	54 (60)
No	36 (40)
Chronic Illness n (%)	
Yes	4 (4.4)
No	86 (95.6)
Reason for Choosing the Department n (%)	
Intrinsic interest in the department	5 (5.6)
Job opportunities	42 (46.7)
Exam score	39 (43.3)
Peer pressure	4 (4.4)
Awareness of Professional Definition n (%)	
Yes	71 (78.9)
No	19 (21.1)

X ± SD: mean ± standard deviation, n: number

Table II presents the results of students' knowledge levels about the profession before their education. Forty percent of the students thought they could only provide care for elderly patients, and 99% thought they could work in public institutions. Sixteen percent of the students disagreed with the statement: 'An elderly care technician can start their own business.' Ninety-four percent of the students thought that an elderly care technician graduates as a health

technician, 50% thought they were in the same profession as clinical support staff, and 56% did not know that their profession had an association. When asked if they knew the content of the professional definition, 71% of the students answered yes. Seventy percent of the students stated that they knew in which units they could work, while 38% stated that an elderly care technician cannot be a unit manager.

Table II. Students' Knowledge Levels About the Profession Before the Workshop

		N	%
Elderly care technician can only care for elderly patients.	Yes	36	40.0
	No	54	60.0
Elderly care technician can work in public institutions	Yes	88	97.8
	No	2	2.2
Elderly care technicians cannot work in private institutions and organizations.	Yes	2	2.2
	No	88	97.8
Elderly care technicians can start their own business.	Yes	76	84.4
	No	14	15.6
Elderly care technician graduates with the title of health technician.	Yes	85	94.4
	No	5	5.6
Elderly care technician and clinical support staff are the same professional group.	Yes	44	48.9
	No	46	51.1
Do you know that your professional group has an association?	Yes	40	44.4
	No	50	55.6
Are you knowledgeable about the content of your job description?	Yes	64	71.1
	No	26	28.9
Do you know in which units an elderly care technician can work in public institutions?	Yes	63	70
	No	27	30
Can an elderly care technician be a unit manager in private/public institutions?	Yes	56	62.2
	No	34	37.8

Table III presents the results of students' knowledge levels about the profession after their education. Seventy-one percent of the students stated that they do not only care for elderly patients. The rate of those who stated that an elderly care technician can work in private institutions is 94%, and 91% stated that an elderly care technician can start their own business. Twenty-four percent of the students thought that an elderly care technician graduates as a health technician, 88% thought they were in the same profession as clinical support staff, and 97% knew that their profession had an association. When asked if they knew the content of the professional definition, 96.7% of the students answered yes. Ninety-nine percent of the students stated that they knew in which units they could work, and 72% stated that an elderly care technician can work as a unit manager.

Upon examination of the Career Futures Scale scores, female students showed a pre-education score of 98.81 ± 12.83 and a post-education score of 102.20 ± 14.37 . While no significant change was observed in the subscales for female students, their total scale score increased significantly after the education ($p=0.018$).

For first-year students, the pre-education scale score was 88.82 ± 16.71 and the post-education score was 92.52 ± 11.36 ; for second-year students, the pre-education score was 88.67 ± 11.61 and the post-education score was 95.06 ± 18.14 . A significant increase was observed in the Career Knowledge subscale (before/after: $10.21 \pm 2.46 / 11.02 \pm 1.82$, $p=0.011$) and in the total score of the scale (before/after: $98.53 \pm 13.88 / 101.75 \pm 13.28$, $p=0.024$) (Table V).

Table III. Students' Knowledge Levels About the Profession After the Workshop

		N	%
Elderly care technician can only care for elderly patients.	Yes	26	58.9
	No	64	71.1
Elderly care technician can work in public institutions	Yes	87	96.7
	No	3	3.3
Elderly care technicians cannot work in private institutions and organizations.	Yes	5	5.6
	No	85	94.4
Elderly care technicians can start their own business.	Yes	82	91.1
	No	8	8.9
Elderly care technician graduates with the title of health technician.	Yes	22	24.4
	No	68	75.6
Elderly care technician and clinical support staff are the same professional group.	Yes	79	87.8
	No	11	12.2
Do you know that your professional group has an association?	Yes	87	96.7
	No	3	3.3
Are you knowledgeable about the content of your job description?	Yes	87	96.7
	No	3	3.3
Do you know in which units an elderly care technician can work in public institutions?	Yes	89	98.9
	No	1	1.1
Can an elderly care technician be a unit manager in private/public institutions?	Yes	65	72.2
	No	25	27.8

Table IV. Students' Future Attitude Scale Scores Before and After Workshop

Future Attitude Scale/Variables	Before Workshop ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	p between groups	After Workshop ($\bar{X} \pm SD$)	p between groups	p within groups
Women	89.28±14.15	0.521*	94.74±16.16	0.341*	0.005**
	86.95±14.38		91.00±11.68		0.134**
First Class Second Class	88.82±16.71	0.960*	92.52±11.36	0.450*	0.043**
	88.67±11.61		95.06±18.14		0.017**

X ± SD: mean ± standard deviation, *:T-test in Independent Groups, **: T-test in Dependent Groups, p≤0.05

When the Career Future Scale scores were examined, there was no significant change in the subscales of the scale in female students, but the total score of the scale increased after education (p:0.018). In 1st-grade students, a significant increase was observed in the Career Information subscale (p:0.011) and the total score of the scale (p:0.024) (Table V).

When all students' Attitudes Towards the Future (before/after total score 88.74/93.84) and Career Future Scale scores (before/after 99.34/102.06) were examined, a significant increase was observed after the training (p:0.002, p:0.022) (Figure I).

Table V. Students' Career Future Scale Scores Before and After Workshop

Career Future Scale	Before Workshop ($X \pm SD$)	p between groups	After Workshop ($X \pm SD$)	p between groups	p within groups
Career compatibility Women Men	46.27 \pm 5.79 47.50 \pm 5.61	0.404	48.18 \pm 8.61 48.15 \pm 5.23	0.989	0.062 0.559
Career optimism Women Men	41.84 \pm 6.81 41.5 \pm 8.11	0.830	42.78 \pm 7.09 42.10 \pm 6.72	0.706	0.155 0.704
Career information Women Men	10.69 \pm 2.55 11.45 \pm 2.87	0.261	11.23 \pm 1.90 11.30 \pm 1.75	0.892	0.057 0.789
Career Future Scale Total Score Women Men	98.81 \pm 12.83 100.40 \pm 15.03	0.640	102.20 \pm 14.37 102.57 \pm 11.23	0.862	0.018 0.605
Career compatibility First Class Second Class	46.97 \pm 5.72 46.18 \pm 5.80	0.522	47.87 \pm 5.35 48.47 \pm 9.89	0.734	0.148 0.141
Career optimism First Class Second Class	41.34 \pm 7.65 42.10 \pm 6.62	0.615	42.85 \pm 7.81 42.39 \pm 6.15	0.765	0.099 0.766
Career information First Class Second Class	10.21 \pm 2.46 11.41 \pm 2.66	0.031	11.02 \pm 1.82 11.46 \pm 1.89	0.281	0.011 0.903
Career Future Scale TotalScore First Class Second Class	98.53 \pm 13.88 99.70 \pm 12.87	0.681	101.75 \pm 13.28 102.35 \pm 14.17	0.843	0.024 0.744

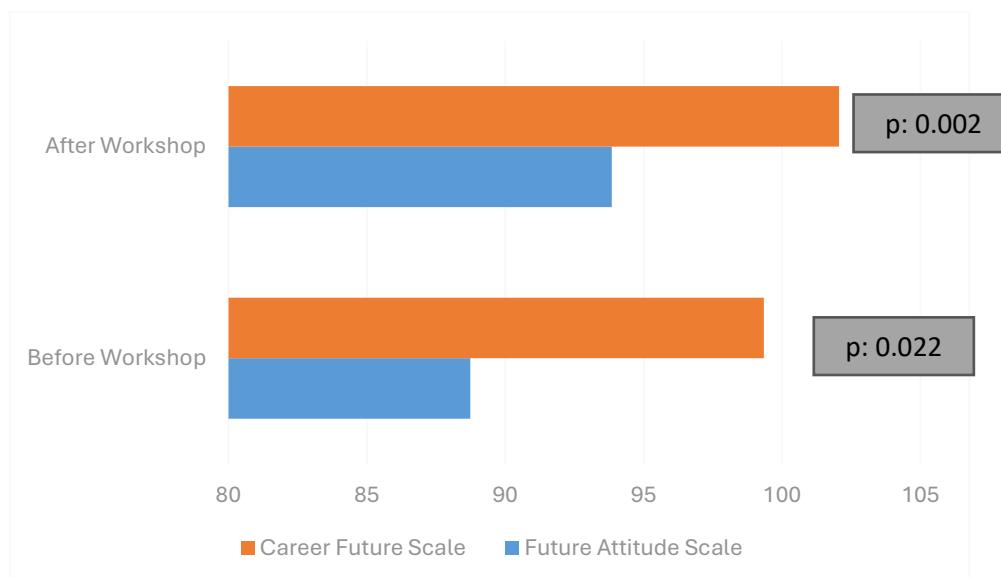


Figure I. Students' Attitudes Towards the Future and Career Future Scale Scores Before and After the Workshop

DISCUSSION

This study evaluated the effectiveness of a workshop designed to enhance students' professional awareness, mitigate identity confusion, and facilitate career goal setting in an elderly care program. By comparing students' career and future-oriented attitudes before and after the workshop, the study found that the intervention led to a significant increase in their knowledge of the profession and fostered a more positive outlook toward their future careers.

Students' motivations for selecting a specific major have profound implications for their career trajectories and future aspirations. Research by Birinci and associates revealed that peer influence was a determining factor in the major selection of 49% of students (Birinci 2020). In their study, Okur and Baykal determined that the primary factors influencing students' choice of major were the prospect of employment and a passion for the field (Okur and Baykal 2020). Subsequent research identified employment prospects as the leading factor influencing students' major selection (Baykal et al., 2010). A study investigating students' knowledge of elderly care programs during the university application process revealed that 74% of students selected the program voluntarily and 67% had prior knowledge of the program (Benli and Acar 2017). In this study, ease of finding employment ranked first (46.7%) among the reasons students chose the elderly care program. Similarly, in another study (Okur and Baykal 2016), the opportunity for employment was among the reasons for preference (41%). In our study, an analysis of students' responses to questions about elderly care technicians revealed the following: Prior to the workshop, 60% of students disagreed with the statement that "elderly care technicians only care for elderly patients," while this proportion increased to 71% post-workshop. Before the workshop, 84% of students believed that elderly care technicians could become self-employed, and this percentage rose to 91% following the training. While 44% of students were aware of a professional association representing their field prior to the workshop, this figure increased to 97% post-workshop. Furthermore, knowledge of the job

description increased from 71% to 97% after the workshop. Regarding the possibility of elderly care technicians working as managers in their work environments, 62% of students were aware of this before the workshop, and this rate increased to 72% afterward.

The finding in our study that students possessed incomplete or incorrect information regarding the role of elderly care technicians prior to the workshop aligns with the role ambiguity and associated anxiety reported by Güngörbü, Koçan, and Üstün (2017). The subsequent correction of this information and the increased awareness among students regarding the scope of the profession, self-employment opportunities, and professional associations demonstrate the intervention's success in addressing these uncertainties. Our study demonstrated a significant shift in workshop participants' perceptions of their chosen profession and future prospects. The workshop successfully addressed many of their uncertainties, leading to a marked improvement in their knowledge base. Consequently, participants exhibited a more optimistic outlook on their careers. Enhancing the knowledge and positive attitudes of future health professionals regarding their chosen careers during their undergraduate studies is crucial for their professional success. Given the findings of this study, it is imperative to expand the implementation of such workshops.

Our findings revealed a significant increase in Future Attitude Scale scores among female participants following the workshop. This trend was consistent across both first- and second-year students. While Tuncer (2011) reported high future expectations among vocational school students, two separate studies of high school students found no gender differences in future expectations (Coşkun 2007; Tümkaya et al., 2011). In contrast, our study suggests that the workshop intervention was particularly effective in enhancing the future attitude of female participants. This finding suggests that the "caregiver" role attributed to women in society was influential.

A multitude of factors, including academic interests, personality traits, post-graduation employment

prospects, and salary expectations, influence students' career choices. Our study revealed that both first- and second-year students exhibited a strong positive attitude toward career planning, as measured by the Career Planning Scale. Although no gender differences were found in the sub-scale scores, second-year students demonstrated higher levels of career knowledge. Karadaş et al. (2017) found no significant differences in Career Planning Scale sub-scores based on grade level among nursing students. Their study also indicated that the nursing students exhibited high levels of career congruence and optimism, but their perceived knowledge of the job market was moderate. A previous study of senior nursing students revealed that while their overall career future scores were high, their perceived knowledge of the job market was lower compared to their career congruence and optimism scores (Birinci 2021). The high level of career knowledge among senior students in our study can be attributed to their impending graduation and the associated job search activities. This finding is consistent with expectations. The significant improvements in career knowledge, congruence, and optimism observed among all students following the workshop suggest that targeted training can equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge to make informed career decisions.

CONCLUSION

This study underscores the positive impact of career-related education on students' attitudes and aspirations. By identifying students' career-related concerns and providing appropriate training, educators can help students develop a clearer understanding of their chosen profession, enhance their confidence, and make more informed career choices.

Limitation of the study

The study was conducted on a limited sample of students within a specific elderly care program. This may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other

elderly care programs or students in different geographical regions.

Contribution to the Field

The study draws attention to the challenges students encounter in their career development processes, such as a lack of professional knowledge, role ambiguity, and future-oriented anxieties, which may encourage educators and program administrators to focus more on these issues. This heightened awareness can contribute to the improvement of student support mechanisms and curriculum design. Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of developing career planning skills and fostering positive attitudes towards the future. The contribution of the workshop to the increase in students' career planning scale and future attitude scale scores highlights the potential of such interventions on student success and professional commitment.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest regarding any person and/or institution.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Manisa Celal Bayar University Scientific Research Project Coordination for financing the workshop, guest speakers and all the students who participated in this study.

Financial Disclosure

The workshop planned for the study was funded by Manisa Celal Bayar University Scientific Research Project Coordination (project number 2023-108).

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