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The Association of Career Talent Self-Efficacy, Positive Future Expectations and Personal Growth Initiative

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Abstract

In this study, the association between positive future expectation and personal growth initiative as predictors of career and talent development self-efficacy is examined. Convenience sampling method was used for sampling and the research sample consisted of 419 voluntary students. Career and Talent Development Self-Efficacy Scale, Positive Future Expectations Inventory, Personal Growth Initiative Scale were used as data collection instruments. The predictive relationship between the variables was examined by multiple linear regression analysis. According to the results of the analysis, there were significant and positive relationships between career and talent development self-efficacy, positive future expectation and personal growth initiative. Positive future prospects and personal growth initiative explain 32% of career and talent development self-efficacy.

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INTRODUCTION

College students have many developmental tasks to deal with. One of the most important of these is to deal with problems related to career development (Gizir, 2005). In studies examining the psychological counseling needs of university students, it has been determined that the area in which students need help the most is related to career development (Doyle, 2011; Hinkelman & Luzzo, 2007; Yerin Güneri, & Çapa Aydın, 2010; Yılmaz & Gündüz, 2018). According to higher education statistics for the 2020-2021 academic year announced by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), the total number of students enrolled in universities in Turkey is 8 million 240 thousand 997. In Turkey, with a total population of around 83 million 614 thousand, 9.85 out of every 100 people are university students. The data shows that the number of university students is increasing every year (YÖK, 2021).

Herr and Cramer (1988) define career development as the development of a career pattern, the decision to pursue a career, and the integration of career-related life roles, and define it as a lifelong process that involves processes such as uncovering individual differences, interests, talents, and values. It lasts for a long time and is subject to change throughout the process (Yeşilyaprak, 2011). Considering the fact that career development is a very important part of life and career development has far-reaching effects, it is important to understand and support the career development of university students. Career and talent self-efficacy is one of the key components of individuals' career planning and development (Gushue & Whitson, 2006).

Self-efficacy is a person's belief that he or she is capable of completing a task and achieving the desired outcome (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy beliefs are an effective factor in determining how much effort an individual will exert in a given situation. Clearly, this level of effort can be quite crucial to the events in an individual's life. One can speak of both "general competence beliefs" and "field-specific competence beliefs" (Schwarzer, 1994). Coping self-efficacy (CSE) is a field-specific competence belief and a particular form of self-efficacy, which is considered to be the belief in a person's ability to cope with life's threats (Chesney et al., 2006). Therefore, CSE plays a fundamental role when people face stressful events in their lives. Since the future is inherently full of unknown components, future expectations could be influenced by individuals' CSE beliefs.

Hackett and Betz (1981) presented the concept of career and talent self-efficacy based on the concept of self-efficacy. Career and talent self-efficacy, which is a field-specific competence belief, refers to the degree to which individuals feel competent and comfortable about their career plans. This level is a very important factor in determining career choice, academic achievement, and motivation for these preferences, as well as the career field pursued. Yuen et al. (2010) explain career and talent development as an approach that helps students strengthen and use their skills to prepare for the necessary technical skills needed to work in a particular field. Self-efficacy in career and talent development has three factors. These include abilities that are critical for (1) developing one's talents (2) acquiring and applying positive work habits, and (3) exploring career opportunities. Personal talent development is about students' ability to develop their skills to the fullest. Acquiring positive work habits and values, such as working consistently without supervision, taking full responsibility for studies, time management, and peer support when needed, is important. Career exploration involves the proactive ability to discover alternative career paths and make new plans and decisions based on one's qualifications (Yuen et al., 2010).

Personal growth is a process in which individuals understand themselves and gain awareness, and this experience leads to a change in the individual's feelings, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Wright et al., 2006). Personal growth initiative is defined as active and engaged participation in the process of seeking to gain a metacognitive structure as a guide for purposeful participation (Martin, 2009; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Personal growth initiative has two main components: cognitive and behavioral (Robitschek, 2003). A person with high personal growth initiative may choose to learn from experiences about stressful life and overcome problems by striving to change. A person with low

personal growth initiative may not strive to improve perceived self-awareness, but instead may want to return to basic emotional levels that make it easier to feel better (Martin, 2009). At this point, personal growth initiative may be an important element related to career and talent self-efficacy.

Individuals' future expectations can be either positive or negative (Scheirer & Carver, 1985). Individuals with a positive future orientation are quite optimistic and look to the future with hope. From this point of view, individuals with a positive future orientation make efforts to achieve their future goals compared to individuals with a negative orientation (MacLeod & Byrne, 1996). Parents and other family members influence young people's future expectations by acting as role models, directly communicating their expectations, and establishing criteria for success (McCabe & Barnett, 2000). In addition, teachers and peers are among the important factors that shape young people's future expectations (Givvin, 2001). Consequently, adults' values about life in general affect young people and they take adults' values as a model when setting their goals (Giyvin, 2001). McCabe and Barnett (2000) indicate that the most important expectation of young people for the future is to have a good job and career. In this sense, future expectations are closely related to young people's self-efficacy in terms of career and talent.

The role of self-efficacy in career and talent has not been adequately addressed in the literature. In this regard, high career self-efficacy is related to high self-determined motivation and satisfaction with the field of study among students (Komarraju, Swanson, & Nadler, 2014). Self-efficacy in career decisions has been reported to be related to career adaptability (Hou, Wu, & Liu, 2014), gender and ethnic differences (Chung, 2002), career adjustment (Betz & Luzzo, 1996), career exploration behavior (Blustein, 1989), and several psychological variables such as internal locus of control beliefs (Taylor & Popma, 1990) and global self-esteem (Betz & Klein, 1996). Self-efficacy beliefs are the best predictor of career indecision and emotional difficulties are predictors of career decision making (Saka, Gati, & Kelly, 2008). From these perspectives, the present study seeks to understand the career and talent development efficacy of college students using coping self-efficacy and positive future expectations. Therefore, the association between positive future expectation and personal growth initiative as predictors of career and talent development self-efficacy is examined in the current study. Research's question is as presented:

(1) Are positive future expectations level and personal growth initiative level of the university students significant predictors of career and talent development self-efficacy?

METHOD

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research is a correlational design model, which is one of the quantitative research methods.

SAMPLE

The sample was drawn by using convenience sampling method and consisted of 419 volunteer students from the Faculty of Education at Muğla Sıtkı Koçman University, Turkey. The participants were randomly selected among the fourth-grade students and the students of the pedagogical training program. This is because they are about to make a career decision. 270 (64.6%) of the participants were female and 148 (35.4%) were male and their ages ranged from 20 to 29 years (Mean: 22.88, Sd: 1.42).

DATA COLLECTION

CAREER AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT SELF-EFFICACY SCALE (CTD-SES)

The scale was developed by Yuen et al. (2010) and adapted for Turkish population by Turan, Çelik, and İskender (2015). CTD-SES has 18 items rated and it is a 6-point scale. It has three subscales: talent development self-efficacy, habits and values self-efficacy, and career exploration self-efficacy.

Cronbach's Alpha reliability and split-half reliability is reported as being good enough. Confirmatory factor analysis is examined with chi-square ($\chi 2$ = 719.30, Sd = 130, p = .00) and fit indices shows good fit. As a result, the factor structure of the scale in the Turkish form has a good fit as in the original factor structure. The internal consistency reliability of the scale is .92. In addition, the split-half reliability is .86. Furthermore, the corrected item-total correlations ranged from .49 to .67.

POSITIVE FUTURE EXPECTATIONS INVENTORY (PFEI)

This scale measures positive expectations about individuals' personal future. PFEI was developed by İmamoğlu (2001). PFEI is a five-item Likert-type scale and items are scored between 1 (do not agree at all) and 5 (completely agree). There are no reverse items in the scale. The Cronbach's alpha of the PFEI was .85 and test retest reliability is .72. Higher scores obtained from the inventory indicate higher expectation of a positive future.

PERSONAL GROWTH INITIATIVE SCALE (PGIS)

PGSI is developed by Akın and Anlı (2011). The sample of research consists of 336 high school students. Exploratory factor analysis results present a 9 items loaded one factor structure. The total variance is 37% and factor loadings are between .48 to .70. The model shows good fit as fit (RMSEA=.055, NFI=.96, CFI=.98, IFI=.98, GFI=.97, AGFI=.94). For concurrent validity the correlations between PGIS and Self-Compassion Scale were calculated and there is a positive relationship between the variables. The internal consistency reliability coefficient is of the scale is .90 and the test-retest reliability coefficient is .94.

DATA ANALYSIS

In the study, data data were collected from participants during lecture time at the university by obtaining permission from the instructor. During data collection, consent was obtained from the participants on the principle of voluntariness. Information about the purpose of the study was first given, and then scales were provided to participants who wished to participate in the study. When necessary, additional explanations were provided to participants. The application of the measurement instruments took between 35-40 minutes.

The data were analyzed with the SPSS 23 package program. The predictive relationship between the variables was examined by multiple linear regression analysis. While analyzing the data in the research, the items that should be reverse coded first were reverse coded. Then, the total scores were calculated and converted to standard z-scores and outliers in the data set were removed.

FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics data including N, mean, median and df are given in Table 1. There are no extreme deviations between the measures of central tendency, and the kurtosis and skewness values are in the range of [-1, +1]. According to these results, it can be said that the data are normally distributed.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics of the Variables*

	Career and Talent Development Self-Efficacy	*Positive Future Expectations*	*Personal Growth Initiative*
N	418	418	418
Mean	88.6	17.5	40.5
Median	90.0	18.0	41
Sd	12.9	2.47	7.33

According to Table 1, participants' mean of the career and talent development self-efficacy level is 88.6 (Sd = 12.9); positive future expectations level is 17.5 (Sd = 2.47); personal growth initiative level is 40.5 (Sd = 7.33).

Correlations between all the variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Correlations Between the Variables*

	1	*2*	*3*
Career and Talent Development Self-Efficacy	1	.38*	.42*
Personal Growth Initiative		1	.36*
Positive Future Expectations			1

*p< 0.001

According to Table 2, in order for the regression analysis to give accurate results, it is expected that the variables do not have a high correlation (multi-collinearity) among themselves. In order to examine this situation, VIF and tolerance values were calculated. Since VIF values are less than 10 (1.40) and tolerance values are greater than 0.2 (.71), it can be said that there is no multicollinearity. Correlations between the variables are meaningful and in the positive directions as presented in Table 2.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the variables that predicted career and talent development self-efficacy. Regression analysis results are given in Table 3.

Table 3. *Regression Analysis*

Variables	*B*	*SE*	*Beta*	*T*	*p*
Intercept	39.63	4.29		9.23	.00*
Personal growth initiative	.46	.08	.26	5.73	.00*
Positive future expectations	1.73	.23	.33	7.27	.00*

R= 0.49, R^2=0.24

$F_{(2\text{-}415)}$= 66.82, *p < .001

As can be seen in Table 3, personal growth initiative and positive future expectations explain about 24% of the total variance for career and talent development self-efficacy (R= 0.49, R^2=0.24). According to the standardized regression coefficients, the order of importance of the predictor variables on career and talent development self-efficacy are positive future expectations and personal growth initiative (F(2-415)= 66.82, p<.001). According to the t-test results regarding the significance of the regression coefficients, positive future expectations and personal growth initiative variables are a significant predictor of career and talent development self-efficacy.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined the relationship between career and talent development self-efficacy, positive future expectations, and personal growth initiative. Regression analysis revealed that positive future expectations and personal growth initiatives predicted 24% of self-efficacy in career and talent development.

One of the variables contributing to the regression analysis is positive future expectation. Positive future expectation significantly predicted career and talent development self-efficacy. This result is consistent with some previous studies. As MacLeod and Byrne (1996) found, individuals with

positive future expectations are more motivated to invest in their career goals. McCabe and Barnett (2000) state that the most important expectation young people have for the future is to have a good job and career. Individuals who have a more positive outlook on the future feel more confident in making their future career plans. Therefore, the new steps they take towards their career will contribute to their self-efficacy about their career and talents.

Another variable contributing to the regression analysis is personal growth initiative. Personal growth initiative significantly predicted career and talent development self-efficacy. This result is consistent with some previous studies. According to Martin (2009), commitment to career development problems may decrease when the level of personal growth initiative is low. Although there are notable studies predicting the relationships between career self-efficacy and career adaptability (Hou et al., 2014), career self-efficacy and gender and ethnic differences (Chung, 2002), career self-efficacy and career adaptation (Betz & Luzzo, 1996), career self-efficacy and career exploration behavior (Blustein, 1989; Gushue & Withson, 2006; Makki, Salleh, Memon, & Harun, 2015), career self-efficacy and various psychological variables such as internal locus of control (Taylor & Popma, 1990). There are not many studies that examine the relationships between personal growth and self-efficacy in career and talent development. The finding of this study is that personal growth initiative significantly predicts self-efficacy in career and talent development. Personal growth initiative is an active participation in the process of striving for gain. It is therefore logical that individuals who have high levels of personal growth initiative are more likely to feel effective in terms of their careers.

As an implication of this study, it will be meaningful to develop policies to support the personal growth of individuals in social and educational environments. Thus, the career choices of individuals will be stronger. In the long run, this power will increase the number of professionals in business life who can demonstrate their potential. As an another implication of the study, positive future expectations is a meaningful factor on career and talent self-efficacy. Positive future expectations are influenced by social and individual-level situations (Stoddard & Pierce, 2015). On the one hand, community-oriented resources are need to be developed. Ensuring better social conditions is essential for young people to develop positive future expectations. Individuals, with increased positive expectations for the future, can reveal their potential in their career development at a high level. On the other hand, individual-oriented resources must be supported by developing all life skills of young people starting with their first childhood years. Expanding the goals in the field of personal development in the guidance programs of the schools and strengthening the practices of guidance programs will provide support to individuals in this sense.

This study has some limitations. First, it discusses two of the variables that are predictors of career and talent development self-efficacy. However, the reasons for this predictive relationship are not known. Therefore, studies could be designed to causally examine career and talent development efficacy. In addition, longitudinal studies are believed to be highly effective in understanding how career and talent development effectiveness evolves. Longitudinal studies can provide clarity on how career and talent development effectiveness evolves over the course of development. The second limitation of the study is that the participants were only university students. However, career development can be completely different for individuals with different levels of education. In future studies, it may be more helpful for understanding career and talent self-efficacy to reach out to individuals with different levels of education as well as individuals who are not in education.

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