



## **Determination of Gender-Based Differences in Career Competence**

### **Expectations of University Students in Manisa/Turkey**

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#### Abstract

This study aimed to determine of gender-based differences in career competence expectations of students studying in Manisa Celal Bayar University in 2015-2016 academic year. This is a cross-sectional study. The research population is composed of the undergraduate students studying in Manisa Celal Bayar University (n=4698). The research sample was determined as 1251 with the smallest sample as 50% prevalence and 1% margin of error at 0.05. A total of 1626 students were reached. Data were collected with three forms in the study namely sociodemographic questionnaire form, attitudes related to career-gender effect questionnaire and Career Decision Competence Expectations Scale Short Questionnaire. A statistically significant relation was established between the career expectations of research group and age and gender. As the age gets older, career expectations of male students are better than others. However, a statistically significant relation was found between male and female students concerning the gender-career effect attitudes in the research group. Male students are more inclined to gendered attitude. It has been determined that career expectations differ by gender. In this concept, it is thought that the programs related to gender and sex may increase the academic career expectations of especially female students.

#### Research Article

## INTRODUCTION

Societies trying to implement democracy as a state and society order aimed to achieve equality among their citizens; however, they mostly failed to have equal rights for women and men because of gender inequality. Nevertheless, gender role becomes a determinant in terms of wage labor and the woman working in unequal conditions compared to men are exposed to “horizontal discrimination” and they experience “vertical discrimination” while working in any field by failing to reach senior management levels as much as men <sup>1</sup> and they come across various career obstacles. This condition creates positive or negative impacts on career self-efficacy levels of individuals. The concept of career self-efficacy expectation was first used by Bandura who was a social learning theorist <sup>2</sup>. Bandura defined the self-efficacy expectation as the talent perception that the individual can perform the desired behaviors in order to achieve her/his goals. On the other hand, Kıran-Esen and Çelikkaleli <sup>3</sup> defines self-efficacy expectation as a concept that develops following the self-evaluation of individual stating whether the individual will do the required behavior while fulfilling her/his goal, how much effort s/he will exert to complete this behavior and what kind of a coping strategy s/he will develop against the obstacles s/he will

encounter in this process<sup>3</sup>.

When individuals expect low self-efficacy about their behavior, they limit their initiatives and tend to give up on the first difficulty they face. Low self-efficacy expectation serves as a barrier to career development of individuals. Low self-efficacy belief makes people to have a limited place in their workplace and offer them limited career choices <sup>4</sup>. Thus, increasing the self-efficacy expectation level which has a direct effect on career choice appears as an important element that will help individuals make healthy career choice. According to Betz and Hackett <sup>4</sup>, self-efficacy is an important factor affecting the career choice behaviors of women and men.

The difference between career self-efficacy expectations of genders may differ according to such criteria as the development level of the society in which individuals live, their cultural values and the social class they belong to. For this reason, it is important to determine regional career expectations and the affecting factors. So, the purpose of this study is to determine the gender differences on career which is a subject that has not been studied much in Turkish literature. It is thought that data obtained from the study can be important in order to improve the career conditions of students during the university education.

## MATERIAL and METHOD

### Research group

This is a sectional research. The research population is composed of first-year and senior year students studying in Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Science-Literature and School of Health in Manisa Celal Bayar University (n=4698). The research was conducted on a sample group. Each class from the departments having the first and the fourth year (1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year for the faculty of medicine) was randomly selected. For the research sample, the smallest sample number was determined as 1251 with 50% prevalence and 1% margin of error at 0.05 significance level (<http://www.openepi.com/SampleSize/SSPropor.htm>). A total of 1626 individuals were reached in the research.

### Data collection tools

Data were collected with three forms in the research namely sociodemographic questionnaire form, attitudes form related to career-gender effect and Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (CDSES-SF).

Sociodemographic questionnaire form: It is a questionnaire composed of eight questions discussing gender, age, class, parents' educational background, income and employment status.

Attitudes form related to career-gender effect: It was created by the researchers and composed of four questions: The first one is "Does career choice differ by gender?" while the other three questions are related to whether men are more advantageous than women in terms of "Finding employment", "Promotion opportunities at work" and "Wage".

Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale Short Form (CDSES-SF): CDSES-SF developed by Betz et al. <sup>5</sup> is used to determine the self-efficacy levels of university students about the required tasks in the process of decision-making related to their career. The individuals are asked to score the self-efficacy levels about the tasks in 25 items from 1 to 5 (1: no self-efficacy, 5: high self-efficacy). A minimum of 25 and a maximum of 125 points can be obtained from the scale, high scores indicate that career decision making self-efficacy is better. Turkish adaptation of CDSES-SF was performed by Işık <sup>6</sup>. Within the scope of reliability studies of Turkish version of CDSES-SF, Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient

was calculated as .88 and Pearson product of moments correlation coefficient was found as .81 ( $p<.01$ ) in the reliability study which was performed with test-retest method <sup>6</sup>.

### Ethics

Before initiating the research, the required permission was obtained from Manisa Celal Bayar University Ethical Board. Afterwards, legal permission was taken from the faculties in which the research would be conducted and written consent was taken from students.

### Data analysis

Data were evaluated in SPSS for Windows 15.0 statistics package program. Nominal data were defined with percentage distributions and numerical data with mean  $\pm$  ss. Chi square test and Student's t test and regression analysis were used in the evaluation of the relations. Gender adjusted career expectation scores and independent variables were evaluated with ANCOVA.

## RESULTS

Concerning the age distribution of the research group 21.4 $\pm$ 2.3 (17-45), 38.7% (n=629) is male and 61.3% (n=997) is female. 64.1% (n=1043) is freshman. 47.0% (n=764) still stays in dormitory. 52.5% (n=853) is in lower social status (Table 1). Mean career expectation scale distribution of the research group is 94.2 $\pm$ 15.3 (min: 28- max: 125).

In the study, the career expectations of the students who are in the senior year in single analyzes, those with good academic success, those who choose the department they study on purpose, those who want to work in a job related to their department after graduation and those who do not have anxiety about employment after graduation are better than others ( $p<0.05$ ) (Table 2).

When the career expectations of the research group and the variables that were found to be statistically significant in single analyzes are put into the multiple regression analyses, a statistically significant relation was found between career expectations and age and gender. It has been determined that the older the age is in the model, the better the career expectations of male students are compared to others ( $p<0.05$ ) (Table 3).

When the gender adjusted career expectation scores are compared to independent variables, a statistically significant relation was found between career expectation and age and academic success (Table 4).

A statistically significant relation was determined between male and female students concerning the gender-career effect attitudes in the research group ( $p < 0.05$ ). Those agreeing with the statement that the career choice differs by gender are 57.7% and 50.9% in males and females respectively; 32.8% of males and 19.1% of females agree with the statement that men are more advantageous than women in finding employment; those agreeing with the statement that men are more advantageous than women in terms of promotion opportunities at work are 30.4% and 19.6% for males and females respectively and the

rates are 21.0% and 10.8% for males and females regarding the statement that men are more advantageous than women in terms of wage. It has been determined in the study that male students studying in the first year have higher gendered attitude than female students regarding the hypothesis "Career choice differs by gender in males and females" (57.7% and 50.8% respectively). Among the senior students, no statistically significant relation was found by gender. There is a statistically significant relation between male and female students in all other hypotheses and male students are more inclined to gendered-attitude. When only the classes are evaluated regardless of gender, no statistical difference was found between first year and senior year students ( $P > 0.05$ ) (Table 5).

**Table 1.** Some descriptive characteristics of the students

	Male		Female		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Class						
4th Class	218	34.7	365	36.6	583	35.9
1st Class	411	65.3	632	63.4	1043	64.1
Faculty						
Faculty of Science-Literature	145	23.1	310	31.1	455	28.0
School of Health	77	12.2	238	23.9	315	19.4
Faculty of Medicine	43	6.8	57	5.7	100	6.2
Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences	134	21.3	228	22.9	362	22.3
Faculty of Engineering	230	36.6	164	16.4	394	24.2
Mother Education						
Primary education	245	39.0	322	32.3	567	34.9
Primary education and below	384	61.0	675	67.7	1059	65.1
Father Education						
Primary education	343	54.5	475	47.6	818	50.3
Primary education and below	286	45.5	522	52.4	808	49.7
Social Class						
Upper	316	50.2	457	45.8	773	47.5
Lower	313	49.8	540	54.2	853	52.5
To be working now						
No	517	82.2	921	92.4	1438	88.4
Yes	112	17.8	76	7.6	188	11.6
To Work Before						
No	230	36.6	640	64.2	870	53.5
Yes	399	63.4	357	35.8	756	46.5
Academic Success (own expression)						
Bad / medium	334	53.1	564	56.6	898	55.2
Good very good	295	46.9	433	43.4	728	44.8
**What is Effective in Choosing the Department You Read?						
Because it is a profession I love						
Because I believe I can find a job	444	70.6	704	70.6	1148	70.6
Because my relatives want / recommend	458	72.8	719	72.1	1177	72.4
My family has people who do this profession	297	47.2	446	44.7	743	45.7
Since my score is enough for this	173	27.5	229	23.0	402	24.7
Because it is a respected profession	393	62.5	623	62.5	1016	62.5
Since the gain is abundant	362	57.6	590	59.2	952	58.5
Since their working time is not long	314	49.9	447	44.8	761	46.8
	242	38.5	298	29.9	540	33.2
Willingness to Work About the Department						
Yes he wants	563	89.5	928	93.1	1491	91.7
No he doesn't want	66	10.5	69	6.9	135	8.3
Employment Anxiety After Graduation						
Yes	228	36.2	274	27.5	502	30.9
No	401	63.8	723	72.5	69.1	69.1

\* Classified according to the job of the household head; \*\* One person has marked multiple options

**Table 2.** The career expectations of the students and some characteristics

	X±SS	P
Gender Male Female	93.3±15.7 94.7±15.0	0.075
Class 4th Class 1st Class	93.1±15.1 96.0±15.4	0.000
Faculty Faculty of Arts and Sciences (a) Faculty of Health Sciences (b) Faculty of Medicine (c) Faculty of Economics (d) Faculty of Engineering (e)	96.7±17.1 93.2±15.3 95.7±13.6 90.9±15.2 94.7±12.8	0.000 a =b=c=e>d
Mother Education Primary education Primary education and below	95.0±15.5 93.7±15.1	0.113
Father Education Primary education Primary education and below	94.8±15.3 93.6±15.2	0.109
Social Class Upper Lower	94.5±15.1 93.9±15.4	0.395
To be working now No Yes	94.3±16.4 94.2±15.1	0.899
To Work Before No Yes	94.6±15.6 93.8±15.0	0.280
Academic Success (own expression) Bad (a) Medium (b) Good / Very Good (c)	83.4±18.3 90.9±14.4 97.5±14.7	0.000 a<b<c
Those Who Choose The Department They Study On Purpose Yes No	96.2±14.7 89.4±15.7	0.000
Those Who Want To Work In A Job Related To Their Department After Graduation Yes No	94.9±14.7 86.4±18.9	0.000
Those Who Do Not Have Anxiety About Employment After Graduation Yes No	91.5±15.8 96.6±15.4	0.000
Total		

\* In comparing the averages of the two groups; Student's t test; \* In comparing the averages of three and more groups; One-way ANOVA and Post hoc; Bonferroni

**Table 3.** Career expectation levels of the students and variables [Linear regression]

	B	S.E.	$\beta$	%95 CI		P
				min	max	
Age	,735	,162	,112	,418	1,052	,000
Gender	1,799	,780	,057	,269	3,329	,000
Mother Education	-1,452	,794	-,045	-3,009	,106	,068

R 2 = ,016 (Adjust R 2 = ,014)

Variables included in the model: Age; Gender: male (ref) (0), female (1); Mother Education: Above primary education (ref) (0), primary education and below (1); Father Education: Primary education (ref) (0), primary education and lower (1); Working in a still profitable business: no (ref) (0), yes (1); Working in a past income-generating job: no (ref) (0), yes (1)

**Table 4.** ANCOVA results by gender adjusted career expectation scores by independent variables

Source of Variance	Total of Squares	sd	Mean square	F	P
gender	124,445	1	124,445	,573	,449
gender * age	1359,171	2	679,586	3,131	,044
class	40,106	1	40,106	,185	,667
mother education	142,980	1	142,980	,659	,417
father education	86,258	1	86,258	,397	,529
social class	82,803	1	82,803	,381	,537
still working	34,035	1	34,035	,157	,692
work before	346,245	1	346,245	1,595	,207
academic success	24249,011	1	24249,011	111,704	,000
Error	350589,166	1615	217,083		
TotalCorrected Total	14817641,000	1626			
	381979,961	1625			

Dependent Variable: Career prospect; R 2 = ,082 (Adjusted R 2 = ,076)

**Table 5.** Attitudes towards gender of the students

	Male (n)			Famela			Total		
	1 Class	4. Class	Total	1 Class	4. Class	Total	1 Class	4. Class	Total
“There is a gender difference in career choice”									
Attending	*57.7	57.8	57.7	*50.8	51.0	50.9	53.5	53.5	*53.5
Disagree	42.3	42.2	42.3	49.2	49.0	49.1	46.5	46.5	46.5
“Men are more advantageous than women in terms of finding a job”									
Attending	*32.8	*32.6	32.8	*17.9	*20.8	19.0	23.8	25.2	*24.3
Disagree	67.2	67.4	67.2	82.1	79.2	81.0	76.2	74.8	75.7
“Men are more advantageous than women in terms of promotion opportunities at work”									
Attending	*28.5	*33.9	30.4	*18.5	*21.4	19.6	22.4	26.1	*23.7
Disagree	71.5	66.1	69.6	81.5	78.6	80.4	77.6	73.9	76.3
“Men are more advantageous than women in terms of wages”									
Attending	*20.7	*21.6	21.0	*9.5	*13.2	10.8	13.9	16.3	*14.8
Disagree	79.3	78.4	79.0	90.5	86.8	89.2	86.1	83.7	82.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\* Difference between both classes and gender (P <0.05)

## DISCUSSION

Determining which factors affect the thoughts and behaviors of university students about career is very important in terms of controlling these factors and supporting these students.

It has been determined in the study that gender has an effect on career expectations. Career expectations of male students are better than female students. Although there are studies in the literature stating that career expectations differ by gender<sup>7-10</sup>, there are some other studies stating that career expectations do not differ by gender<sup>11-15</sup>. Bandura has stated that<sup>16</sup> there are sexual differences in the perceived vocational self-efficacy, career choice and behaviors of career preparation. However, studies show that men feel more self-efficient

towards science and technology, and women feel more self-efficient towards traditionally expressed areas<sup>2, 4, 16</sup>. Accordingly, individuals' beliefs about which field they will be successful in may be influenced not only from gender, but also from the meaning they attach to being 'female' and/or 'male'. Bandura (1997; 2006) has also stated that social judgments about the success of women and/or men are effective in their career choices and their beliefs in which career path they can progress<sup>2, 16</sup>.

In the study, the academic career expectations of the students who choose their department on purpose and those who want to work in a job related to their department after graduation are better than others. In the literature, it is stated

that choosing the profession willingly reduces the level of professional stress<sup>17,18</sup> and the good future expectations of the willingly chosen profession also positively affect the career expectations<sup>19</sup>.

The academic expectation levels of those who do not have employment anxiety after graduation are better than others. Unemployment, widened by flexible and unsecured forms of employment, is one of the most important social problems of our time. The proliferation of youth unemployment and being a rooted social problem affects not only those who actually experience unemployment; but also the youth categories that are not yet in the "active population" who are likely to be exposed to this widespread risk. Highly educated unemployment rates also increase the perception of unemployment risk felt among young people who continue their education<sup>20</sup>. There is a lot of evidence stating that the anxiety caused by the educated unemployment among youth which was felt intensely after the 2001 crisis in Turkey constitutes a significant source of pressure both among the actually unemployed individuals and the university students close to the graduation stage<sup>21-23</sup>. The increasingly widespread "potential unemployed" judgment leads to decreased expectations from university education. In other words, the negativity of the expectations regarding the results causes the weakening of the career expectations.

A difference was found between male and female students regarding the gender-career effect. A total of 53 percent of university students have stated that career choice differs by gender. However, this rate was higher in males compared to females (57.7% in males and 50.9% in females). This difference exists between both male and female students studying in the first year and the senior year. In other words, it has been ascertained in the study that male students have a gendered attitude while female students do not believe in gender discrimination in their career plan in business life. We can mention such reasons as female students not having a gendered attitude in their career expectations, change in traditional female roles in university students, women coming into prominence with their academic success in society and the change in the limitation of pursuing a career in terms of genders in our country. The first one can be explained with the change in traditional female roles, i.e. change in the roles attributed to women in our country during the phase from being a traditional society to a modern one.

It has been determined in the study that career expectations differ by gender. Moreover, choosing the department willingly and not having anxiety about employment after graduation increase the career expectations. These results are important for the career counselling intervention practices. In this regard, it is thought that the programs related to gendered and sexist discrimination may increase the academic career expectation of particularly female students.

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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