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Effect of Career Days on High School Students' Irrational Beliefs about Career Choice and on Decision Making Skills about Career

Ahmet KUTLU*

Ministry of National Education, Şırnak, Turkey
ORCID: 0000-0002-5184-695X

Ahmet BEDEL

Department of Counseling & Guidance, Maltepe University, İstanbul, Turkey
ORCID: 0000-0003-4215-9290

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The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of career days on 10th grade students' irrational beliefs about career choice and on their career decision-making skills. This research was conducted in two high schools affiliated to the Ministry of National Education in the 2019-2020 academic year. There are totally 102 students in the experimental and control groups. In the research, a quasi-experimental model with pretest-posttest control group was used. Within the scope of the research, ten-week career days were organized for the students in the experimental group. No career days were organized for the students in the control group. In the study, personal information form, irrational beliefs relating to career choice scale and career decision inventory were used as data collection tools. Frequency, Percentage and Arithmetic Average analysis was used for statistical information on demographic variables; Mann Whitney U test was used for the significance of the pre-test post-test difference scores of the experimental and control groups. As a result of the research it has been observed that career days are effective in reducing the irrational beliefs relating to career choice and career indecisions of the students in the experimental group. The results of this study emphasize the importance of career days on students' irrational beliefs about career choice and career decision making skills. The research findings were discussed and suggestions for future research and applications were developed.

Introduction

Due to National Education Ministry Regulation of Secondary Education Institutions high school students make field and branch selection (Ministry of National Education, 2020a). At the same time, an individual student can choose a course for her/his chosen field in order to pursue the career s/he will choose in the future in line with her/his interests, skills, values, wishes and personal characteristics. This choice of students affects their future higher education

* Correspondency: kutluahmetpdr@gmail.com

program and career choices. For this reason, on the basis of career counseling at secondary education level, there are guidance and psychological counseling services that help students to orient themselves to higher education, profession and business areas in line with their career goals (Ministry of National Education, 2020b).

Ginzberg and Super consider the choice of career as a lifelong developmental process and see the adolescence period as a career research period (Yeşilyaprak, 2019). Ginzberg and Super, dividing the vocational development process into stages, take the adolescence as a period in which their interests, abilities, values and professional characteristics are discovered, the dream profession is tested in the conversation-discussion environments within the family, and the choice of career is made at the end of the term (Kuzgun, 2011; Siyez, 2019). The career that an individual chooses is the most important element that shapes her/his identity as it affects his thoughts, the environment s/he will work in, with whom s/he will establish relationships with, what kind of lifestyle s/he will have, for how long s/he will have vacations, her/his social status and her/his entire position in life (Yeşilyaprak, 2019). Thanks to professional activities, a person produces an outcome using his / her capacity. As a result, pleasure and career satisfaction are reflected in the general life of the person. Likewise, uneasiness and dissatisfaction in professional life affect all areas of life of the individual (Özyürek, 2016; Siyez, 2019). In fact, the most important reason for unhappiness in professional life emerges when the career chosen by the person is not suitable for him/her (Kuzgun, 2011).

There are many factors affecting the choice of career as well as affecting many other areas of life. One of them is irrational beliefs about the person's choice of career (Çapan & Owen, 2018). Irrational beliefs are rigid, inconsistent with reality, and are beliefs that distract the individual from personal goals (Köroğlu, 2012). Irrational beliefs can lead to misinterpretations, making inferences, generalization and direct many important choices in life (Yılmaz-Erdem, 2006). These irrational thoughts should be changed so that students can make healthy career decisions. Due to irrational beliefs, students' professional expectations can be negatively affected, leading to an unsuccessful and disappointing occupation selection process. This situation may prevent them from reaching their ideal professions (Anghel & Gati, 2019; Bullock-Yowell, Mcconnel, & Schedin, 2014; Işık, 2013). For this reason, it is necessary to identify irrational beliefs that may prevent healthy profession selection and to replace them with rational beliefs in high school (Kırdök, 2010; Yılmaz-Erdem & Bilge, 2008). Researchers have found that career beliefs are indeed effective in individuals' career decision-making processes (Akkoç, 2012; Bacanlı, 2012; Enright, 1996; Hamamcı & Çoban, 2007; Kırdök, 2010; Peng & Herr, 2000; Saka, Gati, & Kelly, 2008; Yaman, 2014, Yılmaz, 2019).

One of the factors affecting the choice of career is career decision-making skill (Bacanlı, 2019). Career decision making is the choice of a person about a career, education program, or a profession (Doğan, 2014). One of the factors affecting the career decision-making process of the individual is the negative feelings and thoughts experienced in his/her inner world. These feelings and thoughts cause the inability to adequately distinguish information, resulting in career indecision. In addition to this, not recognizing one's own interests, abilities or personal characteristics can cause career indecision (Sharf, 2017). In addition to not knowing himself/herself, when there is a lack of career and field knowledge; the individual might experience career indecision. Another factor that may cause an individual to be indecisive is the inability to compromise with their family, environment and with other people they value. This conflict may cause the individual to have difficulty in making career decisions (Çakır, 2004). Throughout high school years, emphasis should be placed on developing students' career decision-making skills. Because the student needs these skills significantly in university

education and business fields after high school (Çakır, 2004). Individuals who have information about careers and the characteristics of careers become more successful and happier in their lives by making healthy decisions in the process of career decision-making (Gönültaş & Çakır, 2020; Kulcsar, Dobrean, & Gati, 2020). In the current research, it is understood that 10th grade students have a hard time making a healthy career decision as a characteristic of the developmental period (Çakır, 2004). One of the reasons for this difficulty is that they do not recognize their own talents, interests and values as well as career options (Aydemir, 2017; Santos, Wang, & Lewis, 2018; Storme, Celik, & Myszkowski, 2019). In the study conducted by the Ministry of National Education (2010), it was revealed that the most important problems faced by students in the process of choosing a field are as follows: they were not sufficiently informed about the fields they would choose, they were indecisive, they were not aware of their interests and abilities, and they were concerned about finding a job in the future.

It is very important to identify students who have irrational beliefs about the choice of career and who are indecisive about the choice of career, and to organize training in order to prevent possible future problems. In the study conducted by Kırđök (2010), it was revealed that a career decision making program based on cognitive information processing was effective in reducing the career indecision and irrational thoughts and in increasing professional maturity level of ninth grade students. In another study, it was observed that group guidance applied to ninth grade students had an effect on students' realistic behavior in their field preferences (Aydın, 2007). It was understood that vocational group guidance applied to 8th grade students is effective in increasing students' level of self-competence in making career decisions (Bozgeyikli, 2008; Seçer, Gülbahçe & Ateş, 2013). In other studies, it was revealed that career decision-making programs were effective in reducing students' levels of career indecision (Coşkun, 2019; Lam & Santos, 2018; Şeker & Kaya, 2019), and increasing their professional maturity (Bal, 1998; Gök, 2018). Research shows that psychoeducation programs applied in this developmental period are effective in the professional development of students.

Counseling activities including students' recognition of their interests, abilities, values and personality characteristics, realizing career options, establishing a connection between the qualifications required by the professions and personal characteristics, developing a positive attitude towards professions, gaining career awareness, acknowledging the relationship between business life and education are expected from psychological counselors by the Ministry of National Education of Turkey (Ministry of National Education, 2020b). One of the activities that can be done in this context is planning career days. It is thought that career days to be provided for students during high school years will enable students to choose the appropriate field and branch from the programs in high school, to select elective courses and extracurricular activities in relation to their interests, abilities and values, provide healthy and valid information about career alternatives and conditions in line with their characteristics as well as professional development opportunities through gaining knowledge, understanding the effects of professional life on lifestyle, and searching job opportunities after high school (Yeşilyaprak, 2019).

During career days, people who perform the profession communicate directly with students and tell them what kind of processes they will/might through until they get into the profession, will definitely have a more positive effect on students. According to the results of the research conducted by Karahan (2019), students' getting to know the career through people who are working in the field, and with the help of activities such as vocational introduction days, career days, panels and conferences affect their career preferences. In the research conducted on the role of career day activities in the future of students, it was revealed that career days create



sufficient awareness in planning their careers and are valued by students (Eşitti & Bulut, 2017).

When the literature is reviewed, the irrational beliefs of high school students about their choice of career and their career decision-making skills were studied with various variables. However, there is no study on the effect of career days on high school students' irrational beliefs about career choice and on their career decision-making skills. It is thought that the results of this study will make significant contributions to the scholarly work to be done on career counseling in schools. In addition, within the framework of the 2023 Education Vision announced by the Ministry of National Education of Turkey, career offices will be established in high schools and more place will be given to career-related studies. In this respect, it is endeavored to set an example for further career studies. Accordingly, the present study aimed to examine the effect of "Career Days" on 10th grade students' irrational beliefs about their choice of career and on their career decision-making skills.

Depending on the general purpose, the hypotheses of the research are as follows:

- (1) Pre-test and post-test differences of "Irrational Beliefs Relating to Career Choice Scale" results differentiate significantly for students who attended career days and for those who did not.
- (2) Pre-test and post-test differences of "Career Decision Inventory" results differentiate significantly for students who attended career days and for the students who did not.

Method

Research Design

In this study, the model with unequaled control group included in the semi-experimental model, which is one of the experimental research types, was used. Despite the absence of unbiased assignment there is a limitation in the quasi-experimental design, and it is an important alternative pattern when random assignments cannot be made (Büyüköztürk, 2014; Karasar, 2016). Since there is a limited number of students who can participate in the education program, these students formed the experimental group. Before starting the research, Irrational Beliefs Relating to Career Choice Scale and Career Decision Inventory were applied to the experimental and control groups as a pre-test. Then, ten sessions of Career Days were organized for the experimental group. No action was taken in the control group. At the end of the training program, the Irrational Beliefs Relating to Career Choice Scale and the Career Decision Inventory were applied to the experimental and control groups as a post-test.

Participants

The study group of the research consists of two different high schools from the Southeastern Anatolia region. The scales were applied as a pre-test to a total of 204 tenth grade students from two high schools who accepted to take part in the study. In the study, 102 students were included in the experimental group and 102 students in the control group. The demographic information of the participants who forms the sample is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Information on Gender, Socioeconomic Level and Education Levels of Parents of the Experimental and Control Group

Variables		Experimental Frequency (f)	Experimental Percentage (%)	Control Frequency (f)	Control Percentage (%)	Total (N)
Gender	Female	54	52,9	52	51	106
	Male	48	47,1	50	49	98
	N	102	100	102	100	204
Socio economic Status	1000-1500	22	21,5	25	24,5	47
	1500-2000	36	35,2	33	32,3	69
	2000-2500	22	21,5	27	26,4	49
	2500-3000	6	5,8	7	6,8	13
	3000 and above	16	15,6	10	10	26
	N	102	100	102	100	204
Mother's Educational Status	Literate	40	39,2	35	34,3	75
	Primary school	36	35,2	40	39,2	76
	Middle school	20	19,6	15	14,7	35
	High school	4	4	9	8,8	13
	Higher education	2	2	3	3	5
	N	102	100	102	100	204
Father Educational Status	Literate	8	7,8	11	10,8	19
	Primary school	34	33,3	37	36,2	71
	Middle school	16	15,7	20	19,6	36
	High school	38	37,2	30	29,4	68
	Higher education	6	6	4	4	10
	N	102	100	102	100	204

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form

It was prepared by the researchers. It contains information about students' gender, parental education and socio-economic status.

Irrational Beliefs Relating to Career Choice Scale (IBCCS)

The scale was used to measure the level of irrational beliefs about the choice of career of the students in the experimental and control groups. The scale is a 5-point Likert-type scale (5 = Strongly Agree 1 = Strongly Disagree) and consists of 33 items. The scale has 5 sub-dimensions: "perfectionism", "external control", "faulty inference", "generalizations" and "self-esteem". The total score range that can be obtained from the scale is 33 to 165. As the score obtained from the scale increases, the level of irrational beliefs about the choice of career increases. The test-retest reliability coefficient for the entire IBCCS was found to be .78 and the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient was found to be .79. As for the validity studies of IBCCS, in order to examine the construct validity, firstly exploratory and then confirmatory factor analyses were realized. In confirmatory factor analysis, a five factor structure was tested and after repeated analyses, it was observed that the tested model had quite well and significant goodness of fit statistics. In order to examine the discriminant validity, the correlations between IBCCS with N-SLCS and RSE; to examine the convergent validity, the correlation between IBCCS and IBS-A were calculated. The results of the study revealed that correlation between IBCCS and N-SLCS is .28 ($p < .01$), IBCCS and RSE is .12 ($p < .05$) and IBCCS and IBS-A is .36 ($p < .01$) (Yılmaz-Erdem, 2006).



Career Decision Inventory (CDI)

The Career Decision Making Inventory developed by Çakır (2004) was used in the study to measure the career decision levels of the students in the experimental and control groups. The Career Decision Inventory is a five Likert-type scale (1 = very suitable for me, 5 = not suitable for me at all) and consists of 30 items. The scale has 5 sub-dimensions: internal conflict, lack of self-knowledge, lack of occupation and field knowledge, irrational beliefs about career choice, and external conflict. The range of total scores that can be obtained from the scale varies between 30 to 150. It means that the higher the score, the more the career indecision is. The test-retest reliability coefficient for the entire CDI was found to be .83 and the Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient as .85 (Çakır, 2004). Five factors were obtained as a result of the factor analysis performed on 527 ninth grade students to determine the construct validity of the scale (Çakır, 2003). In order to determine the discriminant validity of the inventory, the Vocational Maturity Scale (Bacanlı, 1996) was applied to 45 ninth grade students together with the Career Decision Inventory. The correlation coefficient value obtained as a result of the application is -.68. This result was seen as a proof of the validity of the inventory (Çakır, 2004).

Process

In order for the scales to be used in the study to be applied to the students and to organize career days, consent was obtained from the district national education directorate and the district governorship by stating the purpose of the research. The scales were applied as a pre-test to a total of 204 10th grade students from two high schools who accepted to participate. While applying the scale, it was stated that students will be given numbers according to the class list because the scales will be applied again as a post test. According to the class list, each student was given a number and asked to write on the scales. Signature has been obtained from the students for each career day indicating that they participate voluntarily. One school (102 students) that got high scores on the scale of irrational beliefs about career choice and career decision inventory among the students who were applied the scale was included in the experimental group and one school (102 students) in the control group. Thus, before arranging career days it was assured that both experiment and control groups consisted of participants with have high scored irrational beliefs relating to career choice and low scored irrational beliefs relating to career choice. "Career Days" gatherings are arranged events where each session lasting for 90 minutes with 15 different occupational groups were organized for 10 weeks, and carried out each week on different days for the students in the experimental group. The courses in the curriculum were taught as normal and no career days were organized for the students in the control group. After the "Career Days" ended, post-tests were applied both to the experimental group and the control group.

Presentation of "Career Days" Program

Group work is one of the techniques that teaches students how to acquire vocational knowledge. Giving vocational information to students in groups is an effective method as it is both economic and allows students to interact with each other. As a matter of fact it is a very useful educational service in terms of allowing students to ask questions and express their thoughts. In addition, students can evaluate the information about a career given by the certain member of the career from the perspective their own goals (Kuzgun, 2011).

People who were invited to "Career Days" were chosen from the city where the research was conducted. The aim here is for students to get to know people who have proved themselves in their cities despite all difficulties and are role models, and to change their irrational beliefs

about career, and benefit from the experiences of field experts about career decision-making. In the "Career Days" sessions the following fields, professions and roles were planned to be concentrated upon: medicine in the first session, civil engineering in the second session, map, mining, electrical-electronics engineering in the third session, the former state minister (academician) in the fourth session, the district governor in the fifth session, the rector (veterinarian) in the sixth session, religious affairs advisor in the seventh session, lawyer in the eighth session, teacher in the ninth session and pharmacist, dietician, midwife and nurse professions in the tenth session were discussed. With each career member, the entry requirements of the profession, the difficulties, the personal characteristics required, the relevant exams and stages pertaining to the profession's specialization areas, also the job opportunities of the profession, the related public and private institutions to work for, the progress in the career and the titles gained, the working conditions of the career, interests, talents and values of the career are discussed.

Data Analysis

In the research, according to normal distribution analysis conducted due to differentiation scores of two variables; histogram graphics did not show normal distribution, Q-Q graphics had random scattering (Büyüköztürk, 2010), coefficients of variation are greater than 30%, Skewness (-1.222 and 2.161) and Kurtosis (1.335 and 7.377) values are not between -1.00 and +1.00 (Hair, Black, Babin and Anderson, 2013) and according to these results, it can be said that the data does not show a normal distribution. SPSS WINDOWS 25.0 analysis program was used to analyze data in the study. Among the descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage and arithmetic mean analyses were used to analyze the personal information form. In order to test whether there is a significant difference between the level of irrational beliefs about the choice of career and the career decision-making levels of the experimental and control groups, the Mann Whitney U test for unrelated groups was used. In addition, the effect of the experimental procedure was examined by comparing the difference scores of the experimental and control groups (Büyüköztürk, 2016).

Findings

Whether the experimental and control groups are similar in terms of dependent variables according to the pre-test scores of the scale of irrational beliefs about the choice of career and the career decision inventory were analyzed with the Mann Whitney U-Test and the analysis results are given in Table 2.

Table 2. The Mann Whitney U-Test Results on the Pre-Test Scores of the Irrational Beliefs Relating to Career Choice Scale and the Career Decision Inventory

		Group	N	Average Rank	Rank Sum	U	P
Irrational Beliefs Relating to Career Choice Scale	Experimental		102	108.25	11041.00	46.1	.16
	Control		102	96.75	9869.00		
Career Decision Inventory	Experimental		102	103.91	10599.00	50.5	.73
	Control		102	101.09	10311.00		

When Table 2 is examined, it is seen that there is no significant difference between the experimental and control groups as a result of the analysis of the irrational beliefs relating to career choice scale and career decision inventory scale pre-test scores of the experimental and

control groups (U: 46.16 $p > .05$; U: 50.58 $p > .05$). Considering these results, it can be said that there is no difference between the groups in terms of pre-test mean scores before starting the trial application and they are statistically equal to each other.

The distribution of the experimental and control groups, the arithmetic mean and standard deviations of the pretest-posttest scores are given in Table 3.

Table 3. The Experimental and Control Group Irrational Beliefs Relating to Career Choice Scale and Career Decision Inventory Pre-Test Post-Test Average and Standard Deviation Values

Scale	Group	Test	N	\bar{X}	Ss
Irrational Beliefs Relating to Career Choice Scale	Experimental	Pretest	102	108.94	9.31
		Posttest		76.86	8.87
	Control	Pretest	102	108.11	11.97
		Posttest		108.98	14.49
Career Decision Inventory	Experimental	Pretest	102	103.25	12.11
		Posttest		64.58	10.74
	Control	Pretest	102	103.35	14.64
		Posttest		104.21	14.88

In order to test the hypotheses of the research, the difference scores were found by subtracting the pretest scores from the posttest scores. Mann Whitney U-test was applied to test the significance of the difference scores of the experimental and control groups. Mann Whitney U-test results are given in table 4.

Table 4. Mann Whitney U-Test Results of Pre-Test-Post-Test Difference Scores for Irrational Beliefs Relating to Career Choice Scale and Career Decision Inventory

	Group	N	Average Rank	Rank Sum	U	P
Irrational Beliefs Relating to Career Choice Scale	Experimental	102	51.66	5269.00	16.00	.000
	Control	102	153.34	15641.00		
Career Decision Inventory	Experimental	102	51.50	5253.00	.000	.000
	Control	102	153.50	15657.00		

When Table 4 is examined, it is seen that the pre-test and post-test difference scores of the scale of irrational beliefs relating to career choice of the experimental and control groups differ significantly in favor of the experimental group (U: 16.00, $p < .05$). It is seen that the pre-test-post-test difference scores of the experimental and control groups in the career decision inventory differ significantly in favor of the experimental group (U: .00, $p < .05$). According to these results, it can be said that the psychoeducation program applied is an important factor for decreasing the irrational beliefs relating to career choice and the career decision making scores of the students in the experimental group (the decrease in the score means the increase in vocational determination).

Discussion, Conclusion and Suggestions

Findings obtained as a result of the research showed that career days are effective in reducing the irrational beliefs of the students in the experimental group about their choice of career. This result obtained from the research supports the findings of other studies in the literature (Aydın, 2007; Doğan & Kuzgun, 2008; Kırdök, 2010). It is thought that providing realistic information about the career by the field employees on career days is effective in achieving this result. It is known that students' irrational beliefs play an important role in their

career decision difficulties (Anghel & Gati, 2019; Bullock-Yowell, McConnell, & Schedin, 2014). One of the goals of career counseling is to identify irrational beliefs that are effective factors on career development and choices, and to rearrange these beliefs. Vocational guidance activities to be given during these critical processes of students who are preparing for university help them make choices that are appropriate for their abilities and personality traits. In order to make these choices more healthy and accurate, some activities such as career days can be planned. It is seen that such activities increase the awareness of high school students of their skills, interests and personality traits, and are effective in creating perceptions that are far from irrational beliefs about university education, career choice, and the business world (Doğan & Kuzgun, 2008). These studies will further contribute to students' ability to cope with career difficulties (Perez & Gati, 2017).

According to the other finding obtained as a result of the research, it was concluded that career days are effective in strengthening the career decision-making of students in the experimental group and decreasing their career indecision. This finding obtained as a result of the research supports the other research results in the literature (Bilgin, 1995; Bozgeyikli, 2008; Çakır, 2003; Çınar, 2010; Eşitti and Buluk, 2017; Kahraman, 2020; Kırdök, 2010; Öncü, 1991; Şeker and Kaya, 2019). It is thought that a detailed examination of the career together with the person who is a professional in his/her field, obtaining the necessary information about the career from this very person who works actively in the field, and trying to match students' characteristics with the qualifications required by the career in this process are thought to be effective in obtaining this result. Students' self-knowledge, ability to use their feelings and thoughts well in the decision-making process, the elimination of the lack of knowledge about the field and the career they choose, and their ability to reach an agreement with their family on their career choices play an important role in their career decision-making process.

One of the most important decisions a person makes in her/his life is the decision s/he makes about her/his career. Therefore, it is necessary for students to be informed about the fields and careers needed in the society during field and career selection. Students should be provided with vocational information through various activities during the education process, allowing them to choose a career that is suitable for them and that will benefit the society. With career counseling activities to be held, students' thoughts on professions and their competence to make career decisions will be improved. It is known that increased competencies in making career decisions (Amir & Gati, 2006; Dursun & Kara, 2019; Öztemel, 2012; Santos vd., 2018; Storme vd., 2019; Willner, Gati & Guan, 2015), and vocational maturation (Duru, 2019; Harman & Kırdök, 2018, Ulusoy, Akfırat, & Kezer, 2018) are effective on their career decisions.

Career counseling plays an important role in developing the knowledge and skills of students depending on their vocational development period according to the current and future situations of the employment market (Çivilidağ, Günbayı, & Yörük, 2015; Günbayı & Yassıkaya, 2011). In career counseling, through activities prepared for all students in the school, students can gain realistic thoughts about careers and knowledge, skills and attitudes on career decision-making competencies (Gönültaş & Çakır, 2020; Şeker & Kaya, 2019; Yeşilyaprak, 2019). It is known that teachers and school counselors play an important role in students' career decisions (Hamamcı, Bacanlı, & Doğan, 2013). For this reason, it is vital to provide guidance and psychological counseling services in the field of career development, which is one of the development areas in schools (Ministry of National Education, 2020b).

When the findings of the study are evaluated in general, it is concluded that career days are effective in reducing the irrational beliefs of 10th grade students about choosing a career and

increasing their career decision-making skills. In this direction, "Career Days" may be added to the work programs of Career Offices which will be established in high schools in accordance with the 2023 Education Vision announced by the Ministry of National Education. The "Career Days Module" can be added to the Guidance Services Presentation System by the Ministry of National Education, General Directorate of Special Education and Guidance Services, as part of the annual study programs. A cooperation protocol may be signed between Provincial Directorates of National Education and District National Education Directorates and Turkish Employment Agency in order to support the organization of career days. In order to increase the effectiveness of career days, students can be enabled to make observations in groups of professions in addition to informative conferences. This study was implemented in two schools in the Southeastern Anatolia Region. future studies, can be arranged in different regions and their effects can be compared. In this study, career days were organized by a certain number of people, as career professionals from the region where the study was organized were invited.

In the coming studies, people from other career groups can be reached to provide students with more information about different careers. This study was conducted for 10th grade students. In other studies yet to be carried out, career days can be organized at the middle school level and their effect on students' self-recognition and recognition levels about careers can be examined. In this study semi-experimental design was used. In further studies experimental design can be used by providing the necessary circumstances.

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