

- RESEARCH PAPER -

## IMPACT OF FUTURE EXPECTATIONS ON CAREER PLANNING ATTITUDES' OF PROFESSIONAL ESPORTS ATHLETES

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### **Abstract**

*Esports athletes are undoubtedly the most critical element of the esports sector, which embodies a growing economy all over the world. In the literature, there are yet no researches on the professional expectations and career prospects of those who build their career on professional esports athlete. Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of future expectations of professional esports players in Turkey on their career planning behaviors with factors career adaptability, career optimism, and Perceived knowledge of the job market. The data collected by the survey method were analyzed with computer-aided statistics and Partial Least Square-Structural Equation Model (PLS-SEM) software. According to the results, there is a positive and meaningful relationship in the same direction with the future expectations of Turkish professional sport athletes and their career futures and planning attitudes. The future expectations of sport athletes positively affect their career compatibility and career optimism moderately, their perceptions towards the esports Job market weakly. In this sense, the sample group has a perception of a career future suitable for the esports ecosystem for a sustainable esports career.*

**Keywords:** *Esport Career Future, Esport Athletes Career Development, Esport Human Resource, Future Expectations.*

**JEL Codes:** *O15, L83, J44.*

**Başvuru:** *16.05.2020*

**Kabul:** *25.08.2020*

*This study has been prepared in accordance with Research and Publication Ethics.*

*\* We would like to thank the reviewers for their valuable, constructive, helpful comments and suggestions to make this paper more understandable, faultless and comprehensive.*

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## PROFESYONEL ESPOR OYUNCULARININ GELECEK BEKLENTİLERİNİN KARIYER PLANLAMA DAVRANIŞLARINA ETKİSİ<sup>3</sup>

Öz

*Tüm dünyada giderek artan bir ekonomiyi bünyesinde barındıran espor sektörünün kuşkusuz en önemli unsuru espor oyuncularıdır. Literatürde kariyerini espor oyunculuğu üzerine kurgulayan kimselerin gelecekte mesleki anlamda beklentileri ve kariyeri üzerine araştırmalara rastlanmamıştır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışmanın amacı Türkiye'deki profesyonel espor oyuncularının gelecek beklentilerinin, kariyer planlama davranışlarına etkisini kariyer uyumluluğu, kariyer iyimserliği ve espor iş piyasası alguları boyutlarıyla incelemektir. Anket yöntemi ile toplanan veriler bilgisayar destekli istatistik ve yapısal eşitlik modeli yazılımları ile analiz edilmiştir. Analiz sonuçlarına göre profesyonel espor oyuncularının gelecek beklentileri ile kariyer gelecekleri ile aynı yönde pozitif yönlü anlamlı bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Espor oyuncularının gelecek beklentileri, espora ilişkin kariyer uyumluluklarını ve kariyer iyimserliklerini orta seviyede, espor iş piyasasına ilişkin algılarını düşük seviyede olumlu olarak etkilemektedir. Bu anlamda örneklem grubunun sürdürülebilir bir espor kariyeri için espor ekosistemine uygun bir kariyer geleceği algısı bulunmaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Espor Kariyer Geleceği, Espor Oyuncuları Kariyer Gelişimi, Espor İnsan Kaynağı, Gelecek Beklentileri.*

**JEL Kodu:** *O15, L83, J44.*

*Bu çalışma Araştırma ve Yayın Etiğine uygun olarak hazırlanmıştır*

*\*Makalemizin değerlendirme sürecinde emeği geçen hakemlere değerli, yapıcı ve yardımcı yorum ve önerileri için teşekkür ederiz.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Career is a long-term path, goal, and an uphill struggle pursuit that will last a lifetime. The concept of career, It means to progress continuously in any business chosen by the individual, to gain experience and skills for getting the promotion, more income and responsibility as power and prestige, etc.. Individuals' perceptions about their preferred professional careers to meet their future expectations vary under various conditions. For example, changes in the labor market or possible problems related to the chosen profession affect the individual's expectations regarding the future and career planning. However, compliance of individuals to the professional career, which enables them to live in line with their desires and to look to the future with confidence, is one of the most important factors of individual career planning. In this context, it is essential to examine the relationship between future expectations and the

<sup>3</sup> Genişletilmiş Türkçe Özet, İngilizce makalenin aşağısında yer almaktadır.

compliance of esports careers of esports athletes, who often turn their hobbies into professional careers. Because there are serious concerns about the future expectations of esports athlete's careers, which mostly start at adolescence and rarely continue until the end of their thirties developing countries.

On the other hand, professional athletes need to be researched to turn the esports athlete career target through digital games into a sustainable career planning activity for new generations. With this perspective, this study aims to investigate the effects of professional esports players' future expectations on their esports career futures inventory. In this context, there are various studies on career management and career expectations of athletes in physical sports disciplines. However, the fact that there are very few studies in the literature on esports career planning increases the importance of this study. Also, evaluating the future expectations of professional esports players in terms of career planning will not only create a sustainable esports career for individuals. It will also contribute to the choice of human resources in the esports ecosystem. This study is also essential to change the perception of esports Career as a profession which is still not accepted literally by the parents and general societal perspective which perceives teenagers just as video games player. The scope of the research sample is limited only with Turkish esports Athletes. Accordingly, the athletes continue to their esports career as licensed by the Turkish esports Federation and currently acting in League of Legends (LOL) league teams constitute the universe of this study. The study is carried out with computer-aided quantitative research design and structural equation model (SEM). For this purpose, this survey includes the "Future Expectations Scale" developed by Tuncer (2011) consisting of 14 questions and three factors and "Career Future Inventory Scale" which was developed by Rottinghaus et al. (2005) and translated into Turkish by Kalafat (2012), consists of 25 questions and three factors was applied to 128 professional esports athletes in the LOL leagues.

This study consists of four sections. Introductory part examines the concept of individual future expectations and components of career futures inventory as a theoretical framework and maintains a literature review towards esports Career Researches. The second section presents the methodology of the study, and the third section presents the research findings and results. The study ended with comments and conclusions.

## **1.1. Theoretical Framework**

### *1.1.1. Future Expectations*

Profession; is "the business line" in which an individual operates in a certain period of his/her life. Choosing the right job is also the secret key to one's career and social happiness and success. In this sense, the choice of profession is a crucial decision in an individual's life. Because the profession is a process that requires attention, knowledge, skills, and that

should not be perceived as a temporary job. There are some concrete and notional criteria for individuals to choose the right profession. (Argentero, 1989; McWhirter, 2008). However, economic conditions such as unemployment, poverty, etc., as well as ideals, socio-family pressures and preferences, role models, and perhaps coincidences, are useful in the profession preferences of individuals. When we look at the roots of the profession preferences, we often encounter the feeling of securing themselves of individuals in the future. In this sense, determining the situation that individuals desire to carry out in the future is defined as future expectations. The future expectations that individuals set as a result of their motivation and values are essential factors that determine the line of development and dynamics of society. At the same time, the degree of meeting the future expectations of new professions emerging thanks to the developing technology within the scope of the above factors increases the importance of this study.

### *1.1.2. Career Futures Inventory*

Rottinghaus et al. (2005) describe Career futures inventory which shows promise as a counseling tool and scientific measurement of positive career planning attitudes for individuals mostly influenced from Savickas (1997) under three factors. These are Career adaptability, Career optimism and perceived knowledge on job markets. Career adaptability is a concept that includes individuals' capacity to cope with changes that may arise in current and future business life (Savickas, 1997). In this sense, In career construction theory, Savickas (2005) analyzed career adaptability in four dimensions (Öncel, 2014); These are concern, curiosity, confidence, and control. The concern is to determine the individual's future planning and career options. Career concern is the process of setting future-oriented goals that can be focused on professional orientation and expectations. In professional basis, Like the answer to the question of "Do I have a future?", is to show the individual's concerns about his future, to participate in career planning through awareness and preparation (Tladinyane & Vander Merwe, 2015). Career curiosity is to determine the appropriate options by examining the suitability between the individual's self and labor markets. Career curiosity is the process of researching and informing the suitable job for the individual in working life according to vocational development theories (Yeşilyaprak, 1995). Career confidence expresses the self-efficacy feelings required for the individual to make and implement appropriate educational and professional plans. Self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) refers to how well an individual can react in various situations. On a professional basis, Like the answer to the question of "Can I do it?" career confidence is the awareness of the individual's future as a result of their choices, self-cultivation, self-esteem, competence, and belief (Tladinyane & Van der Merwe, 2015). Career control is related to the acceptance of the individual to have the responsibility in establishing his/her career and believing that it is sufficient in this regard. Career control includes variables such as decision-making, assertiveness, locus of control, autonomy, self-determination, qualifications of effort, and agency.

In the conceptual framework, the concept of career adaptability is that individuals make discoveries about themselves and their professions and have plans related to their careers. Individuals, adaptable with their careers, have the skills to deal with new job responsibilities. They can easily overcome unexpected changes and obstacles that may arise related to business life (Rottinghaus et al., 2005). According to Kalafat (2012) cited from Ebberwein et al. (2004), individuals with high career compatibility are expected to make more planned and realistic decisions in their career constructions.

Optimism is a dynamic process that empowers the individual to adapt to the future, makes the moment and future meaningful, supports the positive perspective and well-being, and maintains good relationships with others. Optimism has positive effects on the physical and mental health of individuals and provides more permanent solutions to the problems encountered. (Creed, Patton & Bartrum, 2002). Career optimism is the expectation that the individual will achieve continuous positive results regarding future career development. Optimist individuals emphasize the most positive aspects of the events related to their careers and feel comfortable during the career planning process. In this sense, career optimism is that people have a positive perspective regarding career plans, although it seems complicated to realize their expectations (Scheier & Carver, 1987). This optimistic point of view of individuals contributes to professional success and life satisfaction. Therefore, optimistic personality features should be supported in determining or developing the level of career compatibility in individuals (Rottinghaus et al. 2005).

Perceived Knowledge on the Job Market, which is the last dimension of the career development scale, is related to how well individuals perceive and perceive the labor market and employment policies (Rottinghaus et al., 2005). As it is known, labor markets have a heterogeneous structure (Borjas, 2008). In many labor markets created by this heterogeneous structure, there is a lack of information among the workers and employers. Individuals who increase their knowledge about the labor markets will contribute positively to career planning as well as the possibility of increasing the bargaining power regarding the employment contract.

## **1.2. Literature Review**

Many studies in the literature examine Future Expectancy (FE) and Career Futures Inventory (CFI) independently. Studies on FE are frequently analyzed under the disciplines of educational sciences, consisting of various student groups from the adolescent to the university level. There are many works in the literature on career adaptability and optimism. However, researches on career maturity, adaptability, and / or future expectations of professional esports athletes have not been found in the literature. On the other hand, in the literature review, various researches were found in sports and educational sciences, especially on sportsman career planning and management (Sandstedt et al., 2004; Lavalley, 2006; Tyrance, Harris & Post, 2013; Kocadağ, 2017; Ribeiro & Rima, 2019, Wendling et al., 2020). From this point

of view, studies investigating career planning and future expectations of esports athletes are very few (Taylor, 2012; Seo, 2016; Salo, 2017; Anderson et al., 2018; Johnson & Woodstock, 2019).

Reitman et al. (2020) conducted a systematic literature review for esports research worldwide. Researchers examined 150 academic studies indexed in Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and EBSCOhost, etc. databases with the qualitative research pattern and content analysis method. According to the results of the analysis, academic literature on esports is expanding in the fields of business, cognitive science, informatics, law, media studies, sociology, and sports sciences. However, there is no trend towards esports human resources, career management, etc. researches within the context of the sub-fields of the esports literature.

Yee (2006) theoretically examined the effect of video games on the boundaries of the relationship between work and play. In his study, Yee stated that the players in the esports ecosystem should make a serious time investment regarding the virtual careers they have to develop.

Yee (2014) stated that the sexist approach in the labor markets is also valid for esports players in his study, where he examines the effects of social change on online games. He stated that mainly female players could not invest enough time in their career development due to gender issues.

Based on the argument that Roger Caillois' (2001), rationalization, and professionalization of digital games by taking part in the working life will have adverse effects on individuals and society, Brock (2017) states that esports players are increasingly working precariously. According to the study, a career without the regular income and only reward-oriented works and especially the best career opportunities of the ecosystem, are offered only to a tiny segment in the elite player category. It is stated that the anxiety disorders started, and the elemental esports abilities have been lost since the thirties in the esports sector, which is highly competitive and precarious.

Ruvalcaba et al. (2018) state that the game industry is a male-dominated sector in their work with a qualitative research pattern for female online video game publishers. According to the results of the analysis, there was no significant difference in terms of gender in sending supporting messages in terms of career development through streaming platforms, while more sexual harassment messages were sent to female publishers. In order to start with the results of the analysis of the study, it is proposed to conduct researches on the careers of women in the esports sector in the coming periods.

Witkowski and Manning (2019) conducted a case study with a qualitative research pattern for various esports leagues. According to the results of the research, professional esports athletes' not getting their wages on time, poor living conditions and training platform deficiencies, and player contracts with intense criminal sanctions negatively affect career devel-

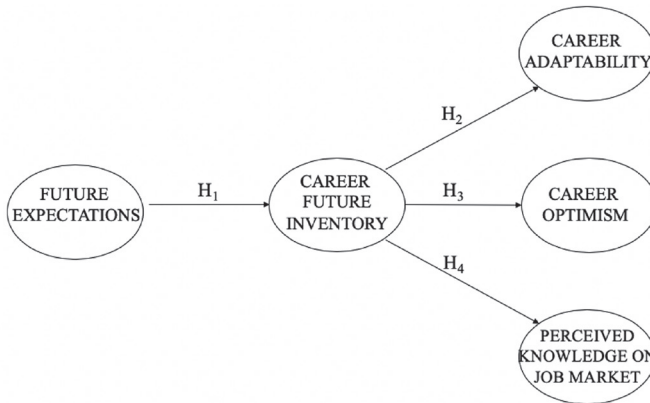
opment. Also, game updates, tournament rules, and season format changes, new teammates, and technologies provided by sponsors affect the career of esports players. In this context, collective player rights studies are recommended through platforms such as Professional Esports Association (PEA) for a sustainable esports career.

Kocadağ (2019) examined the vocational decision levels of high school students interested in esports with quantitative methods according to various variables. According to the results of the research, the vocational indecision of the students interested in esports is high and mostly depends on the daily playing time. Also, students desire to win prizes in esports tournaments and esports career goal negatively affect their professional indecision.

### 1.3. Research Model and Hypotheses

Figure 1 shows the theoretical research model of the study containing its hypotheses.

**Figure 1 Proposed model for hypotheses tests**



According to the research model, four hypotheses are suggested;

$H_1$ : There is a statistically significant positive relationship between future expectations and career futures planning attitudes of Professional esports Athletes.

$H_2$ : There is a statistically significant positive relationship between future expectations and career adaptability of Profesional esports Athletes.

$H_3$ : There is a statistically significant positive relationship between future expectations and career optimism of Profesional esports Athletes.

$H_4$ : There is a statistically significant positive relationship between future expectations of Profesional esports Athletes and their perceived knowledge on job market.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Data Collection**

The survey method was used to collect the data analyzed within the scope of the study. Online survey link has been emailed to all professional esports Athletes under all sports clubs operating in LOL League in Turkey via Turkish E-Sports Federation (TESFED). In this context, there were 128 returns. No erroneous or missing data were found in the content of the survey forms. There are various opinions about the appropriate sample size in structural equation model studies in the literature. In this context, under most widely accepted The Ten-Times Rule, there are more than ten times the samples in the research model (Barclay, Higgins, & Thompson, 1995; Chin, 1998; Hair et al., 2013). Also, 100 to 200 samples are sufficient to prevent prediction errors and to prevent weak path coefficient. (Chin & Newsted, 1999).

### **2.2. Structure of Survey Form**

The survey consists of forty questions. In the first part of the survey, five questions examine demographic characteristics (gender, age, educational & marital status, playing video games except for esports games and watching esports events). In the second part of the survey, scales with validity and reliability have been used in the literature. The scales in the survey are shown below.

The Future Expectations scale was developed with a single factor to obtain information about the future expectations of individuals and to determine the variables that affect future expectations, if any. Future Expectations scale is cited from Tuncer's (2011) paper, which is titled 'A Research Regarding Future Expectations Of University Youth'.

Career Future Inventory scale was developed by Rottinghaus, Day & Borgen (2005) and adapted to Turkish by Kalafat (2012) in order to evaluate positive career planning attitudes in individuals. The scale consists of twenty-five items and three factors called Career Adaptability (CA), Career Optimism (CI) and Perceived Knowledge on Job Market (PK).

### **2.3. Research Method**

SmartPLS SEM software is used to analyze the data collected within the scope of the research (Ringle et al., 2015). This software is a SEM analysis software used in small sample groups and the analysis of non-normal distributed data (Kwong & Wong, 2013; Dülgeroğlu & Başol, 2017). The main reasons for choosing PLS-SEM in studies are that it is useful for small samples, complex models, and hierarchical models and focuses on prediction and exploratory research (Ringle, Sarstedt, & Straub, 2012). In addition to using the partial least squares method, SmartPLS; simultaneously evaluates the reliability and validity of the scales used in the measurement of all variables, as well as the strength, degree, and significance



level of the relationship between the variables in the specified model. In addition, SEM is used in the analysis of macroeconomic data (Başol, 2018). Descriptive analysis of the research data performed first. Subsequently, confirmatory factor analyzes (CFA) related to the sub-dimensions included in the research were performed, and reliability analyzes performed.

### 3. RESULTS

Table-1 shows the descriptive statistics regarding the demographic characteristics of the data of the sample group collected within the scope of the research.

**Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Sample Group**

Groups	Frequency	%	Groups	Frequency	%
<b>Education</b>			<b>Age</b>		
HighSchool	31	24,3	Under18	30	23,4
Undergrad	26	20,3	18-24	93	72,6
Graduate	68	53,2	25-31	2	1,7
Postgraduate	3	2,2	32-40	3	2,3
Missing	-	-	Missing	-	-
Total	128	100	Total	128	100
<b>Sex</b>			<b>MaritalStatus</b>		
Male	125	97,8	Married	3	2,2
Female	3	2,2	Single	125	97,8
Missing	-	-	Missing	-	-
Total	128	100	Total	128	100
<b>Playing video games except esports games</b>			<b>Frequencyof Watching esports Tournament</b>		
Yes	123	96,0	Couple of Timesina Week	58	45,3
No	5	4,0	Couple of Times inaMonth	40	31,3
Missing	-	-	Everyday	22	17,2
Total	128	100	Never	8	6,2
			Missing	-	-
			Total	128	100

Within the scope of the research findings, SMARTPLS software was used to analyze small sample groups and non-normally distributed data (Dülgeroğlu ve Başol, 2017; Yasım; 2019). In addition, the survey results did not meet the normality assumption according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk normality tests conducted with SPSS software (sig. <0.05). Based on the assumption that the data is not normally distributed, SMARTPLS is preferred for the analysis of PLS-SEM.

During analysis, defined measurement model tested the validity and the reliability of the study. Then in the structural model, higher-order factors were assessed, then hypotheses were tested, and lastly  $r^2$  values, which show how much the independent variables in the model explained the variance of the dependent variable, were checked. The bootstrapping technique (10,000 resamples) is used to calculate the T statistics, which measures the significance corresponding to this model’s coefficients with 128 samples. In the analysis, the items whose “factor loadings” are below 0,7 were removed from the model one by one due to their meaninglessness, and the analysis repeated. All Factor Loadings exceed 0,7 after all measurement model re-predicted. Afterward, the factor loadings of the scale items were examined as the relationships were significant.

Table 2 shows that all the constructs had a composite reliability value of  $> 0.70$  (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). In order to enable convergent validity, items with low factor loadings were excluded from the study.

**Table 2 Measurement Model Statistics**

Factors	Questions	Outer Loadings	Composite Reliability	Cronbach’s Alpha			
<b>FUTURE EXPECTATIONS (FE)</b>	FE1	0,718	0,965	0,959			
	FE3	0,878					
	FE5	0,905					
	FE6	0,817					
	FE7	0,882					
	FE9	0,860					
	FE10	0,924					
	FE11	0,818					
	FE12	0,781					
	FE13	0,780					
	FE14	0,907					
	<b>CAREER ADAPTABILITY (CA)</b>	CA1			0,829	0,971	0,966
		CA2			0,903		
		CA3			0,917		
CA4		0,922					
CA5		0,927					
CA6		0,935					
CA7		0,877					
CA9		0,880					

<b>CAREER OPTIMISM (CO)</b>	CO1	0,774	0,927	0,906
	CO2	0,785		
	CO6	0,791		
	CO7	0,836		
	CO10	0,854		
	CO11	0,904		
<b>PERCEIVED KNOWLEDGE ON JOB MARKET (PK)</b>	PK1	0,892	0,872	0,706
	PK3	0,866		

According to Table 2 and Figure 2, all variables that had factor loadings higher than 0.5 (Hulland, 1999) or 0,7 (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988) and the T values indicated that all loadings are significant at 0.01.

In order for the proposed model to be valid, Bagozzi & Yi (1988) state that the AVE values required in the SEM should be higher than 0.50. Besides, Fornell and Larcker (1981) stated that the square roots of the AVE values should be higher than the correlation values in the relevant columns. Table 3 shows that the square root of AVE for each variable is higher than its correlation with other variables. In addition, Table 3 also presents heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) correlations for all latent variables to prove discriminant validity. Accordingly, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) of the correlations is below the threshold of 0.9 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015).

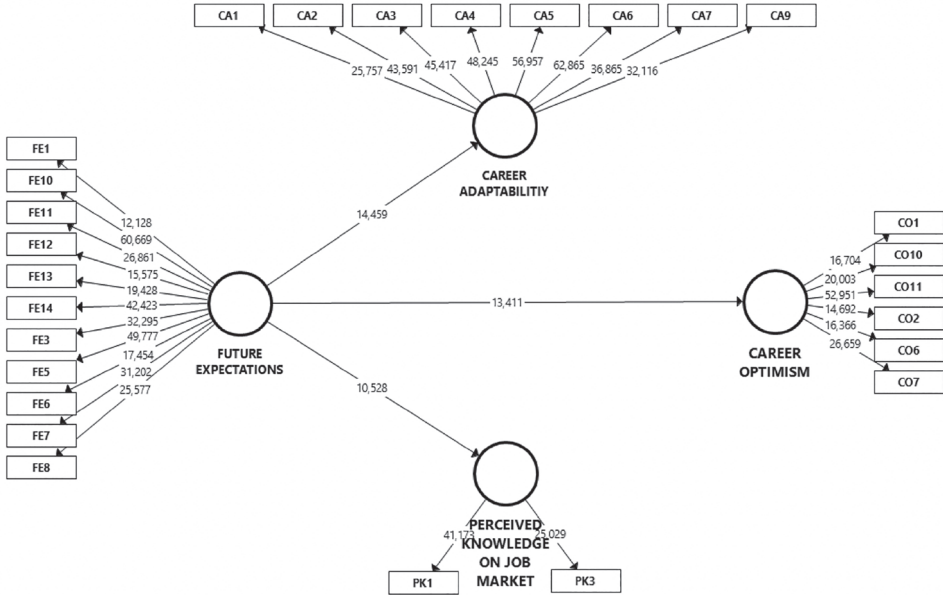
**Table 3 Construct correlations and the squared roots of AVE**

<b>Factors</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>Fornell-Larcker Criterion</b>			
		<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>
<b>(1) Future Expectations</b>	0,714	<b>0,845</b>			
<b>(2) Career Adaptability</b>	0,809	0,744	<b>0,900</b>		
<b>(3) Career Optimism</b>	0,681	0,728	0,886	<b>0,825</b>	
<b>(4) Perceived Knowledge on Job Market</b>	0,772	0,630	0,720	0,815	<b>0,879</b>
<b>Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)</b>					
<b>Factors</b>	<b>(1)</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(3)</b>	<b>(4)</b>	
<b>(1) Future Expectations</b>	-				
<b>(2) Career Adaptability</b>	0,768	-			
<b>(3) Career Optimism</b>	0,772	0,886	-		
<b>(4) Perceived Knowledge on Job Market</b>	0,761	0,862	0,838	-	

After all these analyzes, reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the measurement model are satisfactory for the structural model.

In the SmartPLS software, whether the paths in the structural model predicted are significant or not is evaluated by observing the T-Statistics. If the T-Statistic for the related path is higher than 1.96, the path in the model is significant otherwise is non-significant. Figure 2 shows the path coefficients and T-Statistics in the predicted structural model.

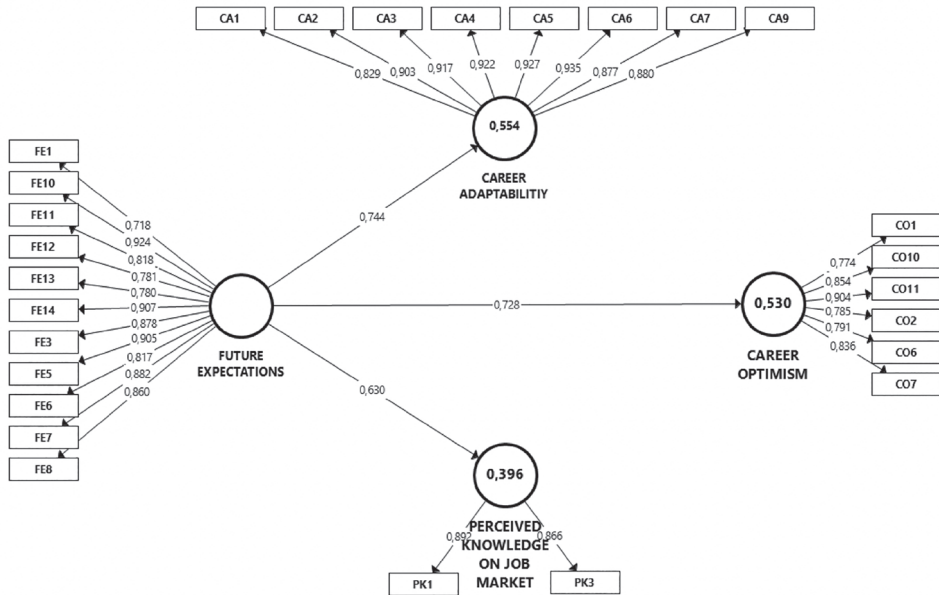
**Figure 2 Path coefficients and T-Statistics of Structural Model**



According to Figure 2; Paths between sub-factors and variables, paths between exogenous variables and endogenous variables are significant. When examined respectively, FE affects CFI, which is the endogenous variable and its sub-factors, in Figure 2, positively and significant (T:15,466, r: 0,581). In this context, there are significant relationships between future expectations, career adaptability (T: 14,459), career optimism (T: 13,411), and Perceived Knowledge on Job Market (T: 10,528).

The path coefficients in the model vary between -1 and +1 in SmartPLS. When the path coefficient approaches 1, the positive significance of the relationship between the variables increases; When it approaches 0, the significance of the relationship between variables decreases. When the path coefficients are negative, the inverse relationship between variables; When the path coefficients are positive, there is a relationship in similar direction between the variables. Figure 3 shows the path coefficients and r<sup>2</sup> for the predicted model.

Figure 3 Path Coefficients and r<sup>2</sup> Values of Model



According to Figure 3, FE significantly affects CFI positive. ( $r^2$ : 0,581). When the effect of FE on all sub-factors of CFI is examined respectively, it significantly but moderately affects CA ( $r^2$ : 0,554), CO ( $r^2$ : 0,530), and PK ( $r^2$ : 0,396) in the same direction. Table 4 shows the results of path coefficients in the research model. For all hypotheses, the path coefficient is significant at the 0.001 level, and so all hypotheses of the research are supported.

Table 4 Direct Effects and Hypotheses Tests

Hypothesis	Paths	Path Coefficients	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
$H_1$	FE→CFI	0,761	15,416	0,000	SUPPORTED
$H_2$	FE→CA(CFI)	0,744	14,459	0,000	SUPPORTED
$H_3$	FE→CO(CFI)	0,728	13,411	0,000	SUPPORTED
$H_4$	FE→PK(CFI)	0,630	10,528	0,000	SUPPORTED

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The esports career has become one of the most remarkable career options for young people recently. The esports sector, which embodies extraordinary opportunities, offers an attractive competitive ecosystem to those who choose esports career, with prize pools up to \$ 20 million

in global tournaments. This study examines the impact of future expectations of professional esports players on career planning behaviors. According to the findings, the future expectations of the athletes positively affect career adaptability. Undoubtedly, athletes' expectations from the future will affect their gaming performance. However, while increasing the performance of these expectations, it is an essential question of how much it will affect their career planning within the esports ecosystem. In parallel with the results of the research, esports clubs should adapt to promising athlete's future expectations with their career planning in the ecosystem for the club's global sustainable achievements. In this context, clubs should guide and maintain plans similar to traditional clubs, by eliminating the future concerns of the athletes and that they can always be part of the healthy ecosystem. In addition to the opportunities provided by the clubs, the Official institutions such as federations or associations that provide esports regulation in the countries should also support the future expectations of esports athletes on a legal basis.

According to the analysis results, the future expectations of professional esports athletes in the ecosystem positively affect their sustainable esports career construction and development. Thus, esports athletes provide a more realistic and planned esports career development. It shows the importance of the concept of career adaptability in order to quickly adapt to the rapid change of the esports ecosystem, which is a technology-oriented discipline, with the positive future expectations of the players. For this reason, it is necessary for esports athletes to keep pace with the technological developments of the ecosystem, to adapt themselves to the technological infrastructure for post-acting, or parallel career opportunities such as publisher, Gaming Arena Designer, Tournament Organizer, Team and esports Athletes' coach within the ecosystem.

According to the results of the study, the career future expectations of esports athletes positively affect their career optimism. In other words, Professional esports athletes within the sample group make their career planning more comfortable due to increasing positive perceptions about esports career and ecosystem. In this sense, for instance, despite the difficulties of being in the category of elite athletes, the ambitious and optimistic behaviors of an esports athlete trying to reach this category will contribute to professional success and life satisfaction as well. In order to increase awareness for esports, public and private sector collaborations in the ecosystem should be established and policies towards accepting esports as an essential career profession.

According to the results of the study, future expectations of esports athletes affect the perceptions of the esports labor market positively. With the impact of the concern and curiosity dimensions of career adaptability stated by Savickas (2005) on career adaptation, the future expectations towards esports career also affect their knowledge of esports labor markets positively. All actors in the esports labor market, which are moving very fast thanks to technology and youth, should make plans to make a more competitive and regulated market for the

careers of the esports Athletes, which are the most critical part of the ecosystem. Thus, it will be possible to train global elite category players. Most of the studies related to esports in the literature are related to game addiction, game industry, esports, and game economy. Unfortunately, studies focusing on the relationship between esports and careers are not enough. For this reason, this study also guides future esports career studies.

## **PROFESYONEL ESPOR OYUNCULARININ GELECEK BEKLENTİLERİNİN KARİYER PLANLAMA DAVRANIŞLARINA ETKİSİ**

### **1. GİRİŞ**

Kariyer, ömür boyu sürecek olan uzun vadeli bir patika, amaç ve uğraşdır. Kariyer kavramı, bireyin seçtiği meslekte yükselme, daha fazla gelir ve sorumluluk sahibi olarak güç ve prestij elde etme vb. amaçlarla herhangi bir iş kolunda sürekli ilerlemeyi, tecrübe ve beceri kazanmayı ifade etmektedir. Bireylerin, arzuları doğrultusunda yaşamayı istediği ve bu yolla geleceğe güvenle bakmalarını sağlayan mesleki kariyer hedefine uygunluğu bireysel kariyer planlamanın en önemli etkenlerinden birisidir. Bu anlamda kişisel hobilerini mesleki kariyere çeviren espor oyuncularının geleceğe ilişkin beklentileri ile espor kariyeri uygunluğu ilişkisinin incelenmesi önemlidir.

Bu çalışmanın amacı, profesyonel espor oyuncusu kariyeri olan bireylerin geleceğe ilişkin beklentilerinin, espor kariyer planlama davranışına etkisini incelemektir. Bu anlamda espor kariyeri planlaması konusunda literatürde oldukça az çalışma bulunması, bu çalışmanın önemini artırmaktadır.

#### **1.1. Literatür Özeti**

Literatürde fiziksel spor disiplinlerindeki sporcuların kariyer yönetimi ve kariyer beklentilerine ilişkin çeşitli çalışmalar bulunmaktadır (Sandstedt et al., 2004; Lavalley, 2006; Tyrance, Harris & Post, 2013; Kocadağ, 2017; Ribeiro & Rima, 2019, Wendling et al., 2020). Ancak profesyonel espor oyuncularına dönük kariyer planlaması, yönetimi ve/veya gelecek beklentilerine dönük araştırmalar literatürde oldukça azdır (Salo, 2017; Andersen et al., 2018; Johnson & Woodstock, 2019).

En güncel araştırmalardan biri olan Reitman vd. (2020), tüm dünyada Espor araştırmalarına yönelik bir literatür araştırması yapmıştır. Çalışmada nitel araştırma deseni ile Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science, and EBSCOhost vb. veritabanları üzerinden 150 akademik çalışmayı bünyesine alan içerik analizi yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Analiz sonuçlarına göre esporlara ilişkin akademik külliyat işletme, bilişsel bilim, enformatik, hukuk, medya çalış-

maları, sosyoloji ve spor bilimleri alanlarında genişlemektedir. Ancak söz konusu külliyat alt alanları içeriğinde espor insan kaynakları, kariyer yönetimi vb. araştırmalara dönük bir eğilim bulunmamaktadır.

## 2. YÖNTEM

Çalışma kapsamında kullanılan verilerin toplanmasında anket yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Çevrimiçi anketler, Türkiye E-Spor Federasyonu (TESFED) vasıtasıyla Türkiye'deki League of Legends Liginde yer alan tüm E-Spor kulüplerindeki profesyonel E-Spor oyuncularına e-posta yoluyla iletilmiştir. Bu kapsamda 128 adet geri dönüş olmuştur. Anketlerin içeriğinde hatalı veya eksik veriye rastlanmamıştır.

Araştırma kapsamında toplanan verilerin analizinde küçük örneklem gruplarında ve normal dağılım beklenmeyen verilerin analizinde kullanılan bir yapısal eşitlik modellemesi analiz yazılımı olan SmartPLS yazılımı kullanılmıştır (Ringle et al., 2015). Araştırma verilerinin ilk olarak tanımlayıcı analizleri gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmada yer alan alt boyutlara ilişkin SmartPls yazılımı ile oluşturulan ölçüm modeli ile doğrulayıcı faktör analizleri gerçekleştirilmiş ve güvenilirlik analizleri yapılmıştır. Daha sonra ise yapısal model vasıtasıyla değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiler analiz edilmiştir.

## 3. BULGULAR

Çalışma kapsamında oluşturulan yapısal modelde egzogen değişkenler ile endojen değişken arasındaki yollar anlamlıdır. Modeldeki yolların anlamlı olup olmadığı “t” değerlerine bakarak değerlendirilmektedir. İlgili yola ilişkin “t” değeri 1.96’dan büyükse model içerisindeki yol anlamlı; “t” değeri 1.96’dan küçükse model içerisindeki yol anlamsız olarak yorumlanmaktadır. Bu anlamda profesyonel esporcuların gelecek beklentilerinin endojen değişken olan Kariyer geleceği alt faktörlerini aynı yönlü olumlu olarak etkilediği görülmüştür. Detaylı incelendiğinde gelecek beklentilerinin kariyer uyumluluğu (t: 14,459), kariyer iyimserliği (t: 13,411) ve Perceived Knowledge on Job Market (t: 10,528) arasında anlamlı ilişkiler vardır.

SmartPLS’de modeldeki yol katsayıları -1 ile +1 arasında değişmektedir. Yol katsayısı 1’e yaklaştığında değişkenler arasındaki ilişki düzeyi artmakta; 0’a yaklaştığında ise değişkenler arasındaki ilişki düzeyi azalmaktadır. Yol katsayısı değerleri (-) olduğunda iki değişken arasında ters yönlü ilişki; yol katsayısı değerleri (+) olduğunda ise değişkenler arası aynı yönlü ilişki bulunmaktadır. profesyonel esporcuların gelecek beklentileri, espor kariyer geleceklerini pozitif etkilemektedir (r: 0,761, r<sup>2</sup>: 0581). Profesyonel esporcuların gelecek beklentilerinin, Kariyer geleceklerinin tüm alt faktörlerine etkisi sırasıyla incelendiğinde kariyer



uyumluluklarını ( $r: 0744$ ), kariyer iyimserliklerini ( $r: 0728$ ) ve espor işgücü piyasası algılarını ( $0,63$ ) aynı yönde pozitif olarak etkilediği sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu anlamda araştırma hipotezlerinin tamamı  $p < ,001$  anlamlılık düzeyinde desteklenmektedir.

#### 4. TARTIŞMA VE SONUÇ

Yapılan az sayıdaki araştırmalarda esporun son derece yetenekli bir kariyer seçeneği olduğu, olağanüstü yetenekleri kendisinde barındırdığı, 20 milyon dolara kadar ödül havuzlarıyla küresel turnuvalarda rekabet etme fırsatı verdiği her geçen gün görülmektedir.

Bu çalışmada profesyonel espor oyuncularının mesleki kariyerlerine ilişkin gelecek beklentilerinin kariyer planlama davranışları üzerindeki etkisi incelenmiştir. Oyuncuların gelecek beklentilerinin kariyer uyumluluklarını pozitif etkilediği görülmüştür. Bu anlamda Espor takımlarının ,esporcuların kariyer planlamalarına yönelik gelecek beklentileri ile uyumlaştırıcı yönlendirme ve planlamalar yapmalıdır. Yapılan analizlere göre profesyonel espor oyuncuların espor sektöründeki gelecek beklentilerinin, onların sürdürülebilir espor kariyeri inşası ve gelişimlerini pozitif etkilemektedir.

Çalışma kapsamında espor oyuncularının pozitif kariyer beklentilerini de espor ekosistemine ilişkin kariyer iyimserliklerini pozitif yönde etkilemektedir. Yani örneklem içerisindeki profesyonel espor oyuncuların espor kariyerine ilişkin pozitif algılarının artması neticesinde kariyer planlamalarını daha rahat yaptıkları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır. Bu anlamda örneğin elite sporcu kategorisinde yer almanın zorluklarını bilen bir espor oyuncusunun iyimser bakış açısının mesleki başarıya ve yaşam memnuniyetine katkı sağlayacaktır.

Çalışma kapsamında espor oyuncularının espor işgücü piyasasına ilişkin algılarının da gelecek beklentileri tarafından etkilendiği görülmüştür. Çok hızlı bir şekilde ilerleyen espor işgücü piyasasında yer alan bütün aktörlerin piyasanın daha rekabetçi ve daha regüle edilmiş bir piyasa haline gelmesine yönelik planlamaların ekosistemin büyüme hızına yönelik yapılması gerekmektedir. Literatürde e-spor ile ilgili çalışmaların çoğu oyun bağımlılığı, oyun endüstrisi, espor ve oyun ekonomisi ile ilgili çalışmalardır. Fakat espor ve kariyer ilişkisine odaklanan çalışmalar maalesef yeterli değildir. Bu nedenle bu çalışma gelecekteki çalışmalar için de yol gösterici bilgiler sunarak esporun ekosisteminin de toplum tarafından kabul gören bir meslek haline gelmesine yönelik politikaların oluşmasına insan kaynakları açısından katkı sağlamaktadır.

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<b>KATKI ORANI / CONTRIBUTION RATE</b>	<b>AÇIKLAMA / EXPLANATION</b>	<b>KATKIDA BULUNANLAR / CONTRIBUTORS</b>
Fikir veya Kavram / <i>Idea or Notion</i>	Araştırma hipotezini veya fikrini oluşturmak / <i>Form the research hypothesis or idea</i>	Ufuk BİNGÖL Yasin Nuri ÇAKIR
Tasarım / <i>Design</i>	Yöntemi, ölçeği ve deseni tasarlamak / <i>Designing method, scale and pattern</i>	Ufuk BİNGÖL Yasin Nuri ÇAKIR
Veri Toplama ve İşleme / <i>Data Collecting and Processing</i>	Verileri toplamak, düzenlenmek ve raporlamak / <i>Collecting, organizing and reporting data</i>	Ufuk BİNGÖL Yasin Nuri ÇAKIR
Tartışma ve Yorum / <i>Discussion and Interpretation</i>	Bulguların değerlendirilmesinde ve sonuçlandırılmasında sorumluluk almak / <i>Taking responsibility in evaluating and finalizing the findings</i>	Ufuk BİNGÖL Yasin Nuri ÇAKIR
Literatür Taraması / <i>Literature Review</i>	Çalışma için gerekli literatürü taramak / <i>Review the literature required for the study</i>	Ufuk BİNGÖL Yasin Nuri ÇAKIR

