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Have Career Plans Changed? Reflections of the Covid-19
Pandemic on Employees' Career Plans

Covid-19 Pandemisinin İşgörenlerin Kariyer Planlarına
Yansımaları

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Have Career Plans Changed? Reflections of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Employees' Career Plans

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Abstract

The main purpose of this research is to determine how Covid-19 affects the career plans of hotel employees. For this purpose, the career plans of the employees are examined before and after Covid-19. The qualitative research method was adopted as it is suitable for the purpose of the research. Semi-structured interview form was used in the interview technique. There are 6 questions in the interview form. The notes and recordings taken during the interviews were checked and transcribed before analysis, and then content analysis was applied. In this way, themes and codes were determined. As a result of the content analysis, "The Effects of Covid-19 on Career Plan" was determined as the main theme. The sub-themes are career plan before Covid-19, thoughts about the profession before Covid-19, Covid-19 process unemployment, Covid-19 process hopelessness, thoughts about the profession after Covid-19, career plan after Covid-19. When the results of the research are evaluated in general, it is concluded that the career plans of some employees changed before and after Covid-19. The unemployment and hopelessness of the employees during the Covid-19 process is seen as the most important reason for this situation. The career plans of some employees did not change before and after Covid-19.

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Özet

Bu çalışmanın temel amacı Covid-19'un otel işletmesi işgörenlerinin kariyer planlarını nasıl etkilediğini belirlemektir. Bu amaç doğrultusunda işgörenlerin kariyer planları Covid-19 öncesi ve sonrası dönem olmak üzere incelenmektedir. Araştırmanın amacına uygun olması nedeniyle nitel araştırma yöntemi benimsenmiştir. Görüşme tekniğinde yarı yapılandırılmış görüşme formu kullanılmıştır. Görüşme formunda 6 soru vardır. Görüşmelerde alınan notlar ve kayıtlar kontrol edilerek analiz öncesi yazıya aktarılmıştır. Daha sonra içerik analizi uygulanmıştır. Bu şekilde temalar ve kodlar belirlenmiştir. İçerik analizi sonucunda ana tema olarak "Covid-19'un Kariyer Planına Etkileri" belirlenmiştir. Alt temalar ise Covid-19 öncesi kariyer planı, Covid-19 öncesi mesleğe ilişkin düşünceler, Covid-19 süreci işsizlik, Covid-19 süreci umutsuzluk, Covid-19 sonrası mesleğe ilişkin düşünceler, Covid-19 sonrası kariyer planıdır. Araştırma sonuçları genel olarak değerlendirildiğinde bazı işgörenlerin Covid-19 öncesi ve sonrasında kariyer planlarının değiştiği sonucuna ulaşılmaktadır. İşgörenlerin Covid-19 sürecinde işsizlik ve umutsuzluk yaşamaları bu durumun en önemli nedeni olarak görülmektedir. Bazı işgörenlerin ise kariyer planları Covid-19 öncesi ve sonrasında değişmemiştir.

1. Introduction

The Covid-19 crisis has taken its place in history as a crisis that threatened human life by causing adverse effects for a long time. One of the sectors that experienced the negative impact of the Covid-19 crisis is tourism (Demir et al., 2021a). To prevent the spread of Covid-19, bans were imposed on issues such as people being in crowded environments and traveling (Demir et al., 2020). Flights between countries were canceled, many businesses in the field of tourism were closed, and events such as festivals were postponed (Aguiar-Quintana, Nguyen, Araujo-Cabrera & Sanabria-Día, 2021). With the increase in restrictions on people's travel, tourism businesses have lost significant income, businesses have been closed or transferred, and job losses of employees have reached profound dimensions (McCartney et al., 2022). As a result of these negativities, the negativities experienced by the employees in tourism enterprises, especially in hotel enterprises, have also increased.

The Covid-19 crisis has caused feelings of stress, anxiety, and fear among employees working in hotel businesses. These negative emotions negatively affected both their work and private lives (Hu et al., 2020). Due to the unemployment of the employees during the temporary closure of the hotel businesses and the reduction in the number of employees and layoffs during the Covid-19 period, the employees also experienced financial losses (Hao et al., 2020). With the financial losses and the health-threatening effect of Covid-19, the careers of the workers were interrupted (Akkermans et al., 2020). It also had an impact on tourism students who dreamed of a career in tourism to reorganize their career choices (Birtch et al., 2021). In this process, employees have revised their career plans (Huo, 2021). Because the employees realized that they were insecure in their jobs during the Covid-19 process. Behaviors such as switching to different fields and re-career planning were experienced (Demir et al., 2021b).

During the Covid-19 crisis, various studies have been conducted on students' and employees' career plans and preferences. It has been determined that students consider changes in their career plans with the effect of the uncertainty created by Covid-19 (Aristovnik et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Mahmud et al., 2020; Samuel et al., 2020) because students experienced career shock (Yılmaz, 2020). In studies conducted for tourism students, it was concluded that students experienced anxiety in their careers due to fear of Covid-19 (Akgün et al., 2022; Benaraba et al., 2022; Büyükkuru, 2022; Güneş & Şen, 2022; İflazoğlu et al., 2021; Kılınç & Varol, 2021; Polat, 2022; Rahimi et al., 2023; Üngüren & Kaçmaz, 2022). In some studies, on tourism students, it was determined that Covid-19 did not have a significant impact on students' careers, and students' desire to work in the tourism sector continued (Lambulira et al., 2022; Miani et al., 2021; Rosyidi, 2021; Shah et al., 2021; Yapıcı et al., 2021; Zurita & Soler, 2021; Zhong et al., 2021). Reichenberger and Raymond (2021) state that students will continue their careers in the tourism sector in the long term.

In studies on hotel business employees, it has been determined that Covid-19 has negative effects on the careers of employees (Bajrami et al., 2021; Bufquin et al., 2021, Chen, 2021; Guzzo et al., 2021). Sun et al. (2022) stated that the fear and anxiety experienced by the employees during the Covid-19 period caused job insecurity. Chen and Chen (2021) stated that employees' experiencing job insecurity during the Covid-19 period has a negative impact on their careers. In some studies, conducted on employees, it has been determined that employees show career resistance despite Covid-19. It was concluded that although the employees experienced the negative effects of Covid-19, they were not concerned about their careers (Güzel, 2021; Li et al., 2022; Ng et al., 2022; Su et al., 2022). Huo (2021) states that having career opportunities reduces the career anxiety caused by Covid-19 and that the employees continue their careers.

We see different results of COVID-19 on the careers of individuals in studies on students in the field of tourism and hotel industry employees. In addition, we see that these studies were carried out as

part of the COVID-19 process. Again, in those studies, there must be more information about students' or employees' career plans before COVID-19. Changes in their careers before and after COVID-19 were only expressed positively or negatively. According to Hooley (2022), post-COVID analysis should be conducted to determine if individuals have a fundamental career change. In this context, the primary purpose of this study is to determine how COVID-19 impacts the career plans of employees in the hospitality sector. To that end, employee career plans will be reviewed before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The change in an employee's career plans will be determined by this.

1. Career Plan

The concept of career expresses the work experiences that shape and impact the lives of individuals (Gönül & Demir, 2020). The purpose chart that a person creates for their professional life is considered to be part of the scope of their career. In that context, a career must be accomplished within the framework of a plan. Career planning determines an individual's career path in accordance with their abilities and goals (Rasheed et al., 2022). The processes created to achieve the identified career objective reference the career plan (Young & Valach, 2004). Career planning occurs through the analysis of objective and subjective factors for individual purposes (Zhang et al., 2021). Career planning is not a career choice in the short term; it is a career choice in the long term. The goal of individuals is to create the best career path for themselves over the long term (Sultana, 2012). Because of this, targeted and successful career planning should have certain components. These include self-assessment, prioritizing evidence, setting concrete goals, and planning (Waddell & Bauer, 2005).

Well-established career planning increases the individual's determination and self-confidence (Sidiropoulou-Dimakakou et al., 2012). Career planning also directly affects the individual's quality of life and future (Akosah-Twumasi et al., 2018). Because with career planning, the individual determines where and how they will be in the future (Sharif et al., 2019). Career planning, which is so essential for the individual, can be affected by different factors. Many factors, such as the individual's personal abilities, interests, family, gender, society, and social conditions, have essential effects on career planning. Fisher and Griggs (1995) state that the circle of friends and socially experienced adverse events are effective in individuals' career planning. Mainly adverse events cause individuals to experience anxiety in career planning (Vignoli et al., 2005).

1.1. Related Studies

Akgün et al. (2022) stated that Covid-19 caused pessimism in tourism guidance students, and students started to search for different careers. Büyükkuru (2022) highlights that career anxiety started in tourism guidance students with Covid-19. Güneş and Şen (2022) explain that as the fear of Covid-19 increases, it negatively affects the career perception of students studying tourism. İflazoğlu et al. (2021) state that students perceive the tourism sector as unreliable in terms of finding a job and making a career. Polat (2022) says that Covid-19 negatively affects students' career plans. Yapıcı et al. (2021) point out that students in the gastronomy department have higher career aspirations in the tourism sector than students in the tourism management department. Kılınç and Varol (2021) state that students change their careers due to Covid-19. Güzel (2021) says that the employees do not consider a career change.

Benaraba et al. (2022) state that students experience career uncertainties during the Covid-19 period. Rahimi et al. (2023) state that career anxiety begins in students with the effect of fear of Covid-19. Üngüren and Kaçmaz (2022) point out that fear of Covid-19 increases career anxiety in students. Lambulira et al. (2022) state that despite Covid-19, students' career aspirations in the tourism sector

continue. Shah et al. (2021) explain that students consider continuing to work in the tourism sector. Zurita and Soler (2021) state that despite Covid-19, students are highly motivated to pursue a career in tourism. Zhong et al. (2021) explain that students have positive thoughts to continue in the sector. Bajrami et al. (2021) state that job insecurity created by Covid-19 leads employees to quit their jobs. Bufquin et al. (2021) point out that Covid-19 causes psychological distress in employees and increases career turnover intentions. Li et al. (2022) state that despite Covid-19, employees are resistant to continue their careers. Ng et al. (2022) state that tourism graduates think positively about continuing in the sector. Su et al. (2022) state that employees have career resilience during the Covid-19 period.

2. Method

The primary purpose of this research is to determine the impact of COVID-19 on the career plans of hotel employees. To do so, employee career plans are reviewed before and after COVID-19. The qualitative research method was adopted because it is adapted to the research. Qualitative research provides the opportunity to analyze the research topics inclusively (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016). The data was gathered through the interview technique. The interview technique allows one to obtain complete information about any subject. This helps reveal people's thoughts (Lune & Berg, 2017). A semi-structured interview form was used in the interview technique. There are six questions on the interview form. The authors developed the interview questions based on the research literature and purpose. Interview questions can be found below. These:

1. What was your career plan before Covid-19? Can you tell us about it?
2. What were your feelings and thoughts about your profession before Covid-19? Can you tell us?
3. Was there a period during Covid-19 when you were not working or unemployed? If yes, what did you think about your career and future in this process?
4. Was there a moment during Covid-19 when you felt hopeless about your career? Can you tell us about it?
5. How are your feelings and thoughts about your profession after Covid-19? Can you tell us about it?
6. What is your career plan after Covid-19? Can you tell us about it?

Judgmental sampling was preferred in the research. In judgmental sampling, the sample consists of participants that the researchers think will suit the research. It is assumed that the participants selected in this sampling method will be ideal for the purpose and content of the research (Şahin & Gürbüz, 2018). Some criteria were taken into consideration in the inclusion of the participants in the research. These are that the participants were working in hotel businesses at the beginning of Covid-19. All of the participants are employees working in five-star hotel businesses in Antalya. In this context, interviews were conducted with 14 employees working in hotel businesses beginning and during the Covid-19 period. Interviews were conducted between February 23 and May 13, 2023. Before the interviews were conducted, ethics committee approval was obtained from the Isparta University of Applied Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board with the decision dated 13.02.2023 and numbered 03.

Before beginning the interviews, participants were briefed on the purpose of the study. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the respondents. Interviews lasted 15 to 23 minutes on average. Participants were coded P1-P2-P3 with the request to retain participant identity information, and responses were provided confidentially. Notes and recordings from the interviews were verified and transcribed before the analysis. The content analysis was then implemented. That way, themes,

and codes were identified. Participants' views on the specific themes are included in the title of the findings.

3. Findings

The demographic characteristics of the participants are given in Table 1. Eight participants are male, the age range is between 22-27, 10 have undergraduate, and their working years vary between 3-7 years.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Participant	Gender	Age	Educational Status	Working Time
P1	Male	24	Undergraduate	4 years
P2	Female	23	Associate Degree	5 years
P3	Female	22	Associate Degree	4 years
P4	Female	25	Undergraduate	6 years
P5	Male	26	Undergraduate	5 years
P6	Male	27	Undergraduate	7 years
P7	Female	25	Undergraduate	5 years
P8	Male	24	Associate Degree	4 years
P9	Male	24	Undergraduate	5 years
P10	Male	25	Undergraduate	6 years
P11	Male	27	Undergraduate	6 years
P12	Female	22	Associate Degree	3 years
P13	Male	23	Undergraduate	4 years
P14	Female	24	Undergraduate	5 years

The research's main theme was "The Effects of Covid-19 on Career Plans". The research sub-themes and codes were identified through the analysis of participant responses. The sub-themes are career plan before Covid-19, thoughts about the profession before Covid-19, Covid-19 process unemployment, Covid-19 process hopelessness, thoughts about the profession after Covid-19, and career plan after Covid-19.

The participants were first asked, "What was your career plan before Covid 19? Can you tell me about it?" question was asked. As a result of content analysis, the sub-theme of "Career plan before Covid-19" was determined. Participant views on the sub-theme of career plan before Covid-19 are as follows:

"I was thinking of working as a cook, but things were interrupted when the pandemic entered, I could not do much during the pandemic period. My career planning was also in this direction, but I had to postpone this plan a little due to the pandemic." (P5)

"We were thinking of working abroad with our group of friends, we wanted to improve ourselves there and come back." (P6)

"I wanted to be military personnel." (P10)

"I did not have any career planning before Covid-19. I did not make a very forward-looking program." (P13)

"Before Covid-19, I wanted to continue my career in the tourism sector. I had a goal of working in the tourism sector in general." (P14)

Obviously, participants had different career plans before Covid-19. The dominant career plan is to work in the tourism sector. Of note, some participants do not have a career plan. A participant wants to become a military person. However, there is evidence that most participants (10 participants) intend to work in the tourism sector in Turkey or abroad.

Table 2. Career Plan Before Covid-19

Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes	Participant View
The Effects of Covid-19 on Career Plans	Career Plan Before Covid-19	Continuing to work in the tourism industry	P2, P7, P8, P12, P14
		To be a cook	P3, P4, P5,
		Working abroad	P6, P9
		No career plan	P11, P13
		Advancement in music	P1
		To be military personnel	P10

Secondly, the participants were asked, "What were your feelings and thoughts about your profession before Covid-19? Can you tell us?" question was asked. As a result of the analysis, the theme of "Thoughts about the profession before Covid-19" was determined. Participant views on the sub-theme of thoughts before Covid-19 are as follows:

"I was thinking positive things about my profession. I had thoughts in my head that I could find suitable jobs all over the country. In general, my thoughts were positive in the pre-covid period." (P2)

"My perspective towards the profession was positive since we live in a tourism paradise country." (P13)

"I love my profession. It is nice to make people happy; being with them in their happy times is a good feeling." (P12)

"It is a complex and tiring profession. I think not everyone can do it. It requires some strength, patience, and stability." (P11).

Participants had more positive opinions in the pre-Covid-19 period. 12 participants stated that they liked their profession and had positive thoughts before Covid-19. 2 participants (P10 and P11) had negative thoughts. Of these two participants, P10 had a plan to become military personnel, while P11 had no career plan. These may be the reasons for the negative opinions of these two participants.

Table 3. Thoughts About the Profession Before Covid-19

Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes	Participant View
The Effects of Covid-19 on Career Plans	Thoughts About the Profession Before Covid-19	Positive Thoughts	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5 P6, P7, P8, P9, P12, P13, P14
		Negative Thoughts	P10, P11

Thirdly, the participants were asked the question "Was there a period during Covid-19 when you were not working or unemployed? If yes, what did you think about your career and future in this process?" As a result of the content analysis, the sub-theme of "Covid-19 process unemployment" was determined. Participant views on the Covid-19 process unemployment sub-theme are as follows:

"I was unemployed during the Covid-19 period, and this process continued until Covid-19 ended and the bans were lifted. I saw it as a short break in terms of my career. I developed myself in other fields." (P8)

"At the beginning, I was unemployed, and I had troubled times because I needed money, but later when the bans were lifted for us, I felt relieved. That process was a bit troublesome. I thought it would never pass" (P13)

“I was unemployed for a while during the bans at the beginning of the Covid-19 period, I thought that the process would continue like that and I was worried.” (P2)

“I was unemployed during the Covid-19 period. I was pessimistic about the future, but I knew that this situation would be overcome somehow.” (P1)

“I did not have such a period. I mean, maybe there was a period of one or two weeks, that's all.” (P10)

“There was no such period, I worked during that period. I did not have any problems.” (P14)

Participants who were unemployed and those who were not unemployed through the COVID-19 process were found to be equal. Unemployed participants were found to be concerned about the situation they were in and had difficult periods. Participants who were not unemployed reported no serious problems.

Table 4. Covid-19 Process Unemployment

Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes	Participant View
The Effects of Covid-19 on Career Plans	Covid-19 Process Unemployment	Unemployed people	P1, P2, P7, P8, P10, P12, P13
		Those who are not unemployed	P3, P4, P5, P6, P9, P11, P14

Fourthly, the participants were asked, *“Was there a moment during Covid-19 when you felt hopeless about your career? Can you tell us about it?”* was asked. As a result of the content analysis, the sub-theme of *“Covid-19 process hopelessness”* was determined. Participant views on the Covid-19 process hopelessness sub-theme are as follows:

“I am pessimistic about my future.” (P1)

“It made me despair.” (P5)

“The Covid-19 period has been one of despair from start to finish.” (P11)

“I experienced hopelessness at first. It was like life had stopped.” (P13)

“I never despaired.” (P4)

“I was not pessimistic. I knew that this ordeal would end.” (P7)

A significant proportion of participants (10 participants) have experienced hopelessness during their careers because of the impact of Covid-19. Participants may have experienced hopelessness, regardless of whether they were unemployed during the Covid-19 process. It can be said that those who do not experience hopelessness have positive thoughts and hope that Covid-19 will end.

Table 5. Covid-19 Process Hopelessness

Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes	Participant View
The Effects of Covid-19 on Career Plans	Covid-19 Process Hopelessness	Those living in hopelessness	P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P9, P10, P11, P13, P14
		Those without hopelessness	P4, P7, P8, P12

Fifthly, the participants were asked *“How are your feelings and thoughts about your profession after Covid-19? Can you tell us about it?”* question was asked. As a result of content analysis, the sub-

theme of *"Thoughts about the profession after Covid-19"* was determined. Participant views on the sub-theme of thoughts about the profession after Covid-19 are as follows:

"Since I love this profession, my thoughts are positive despite everything. I think it will continue like this." (P2)

"I embraced my profession more, I realized how important the sector." (P6)

"I realized that it is a more enjoyable profession." (P13)

"I am afraid of experiencing the same things because the sector is very sensitive. I have more negative thoughts." (P1)

Participants have positive thoughts about their profession and the sector after Covid-19. 13 participants stated that they had positive thoughts about their profession after Covid-19. Only P1 stated that he had negative thoughts about his profession after Covid-19. When the thoughts about the profession before and after Covid-19 are compared, it is seen that the positive thoughts of the participants increased, and they approached their profession more optimistically.

Table 6. Thoughts About the Profession After Covid-19

Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes	Participant View
The Effects of Covid-19 on Career Plans	Thoughts About the Profession After Covid-19	Positive Thoughts	P2, P3, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P11, P12, P13, P14
		Negative Thoughts	P1

Finally, the participants were asked *"What is your career plan after Covid-19? Can you tell us about it?"* was asked. As a result of the content analysis, the sub-theme of *"Career plan after Covid-19"* was determined. Participant views on the career plan after Covid-19 sub-theme are as follows:

"Although I postponed my dreams and goals during the pandemic period, there is a desire to continue my career abroad after the pandemic." (P6)

"My career plan is still the same. I want to work abroad." (P9)

"I decided to become a cook. I put my dream of becoming military personnel on the back burner." (P10)

"My career plan, which did not exist before Covid-19, was formed after Covid-19. I plan to advance in the tourism sector." (P11)

"I don't think I want to continue in the sector. The tourism sector is affected by everything, I can be unemployed at any time." (P14)

"I have a dream to start my own business and be my own boss." (P5)

"I want to go into business. I want to do my own business." (P7)

"I want to open my own business. It may be a little risky, but being unemployed during the Covid-19 period pushed me to this decision. At least I will not be unemployed in such troubled times, I will do my own business." (P12)

Table 7. Career Plan After Covid-19

Main Theme	Sub-Theme	Codes	Participant View
The Effects of Covid-19 on Career Plans	Career Plan After Covid-19	Continuing to work in the tourism industry	P2, P8, P11, P13,
		To be a cook	P3, P4, P10
		Opening your own business	P5, P7, P12
		Working abroad	P2, P6, P9
		Advancement in music	P1
		Build a career in a different field	P14

7 participants' career plans differed after Covid-19. Table 7 shows the participants' career plans before and after Covid-19. Participants such as P5, P7, P12, P14 stated that they wanted to pursue a career in a field different from the tourism sector after Covid-19. Participants such as P10, P11, P13 stated that they wanted to continue working in the tourism sector after Covid-19 and planned their careers in this way. The career plans of other participants did not change.

Table 8. Career Plan Before and After Covid-19

Participants	Career plan before covid-19	Has career plan changed?	Career plan after covid-19
P1	Advancement in music	No	Advancement in music
P2	Continuing to work in the tourism industry	No	Continuing to work in the tourism industry
P3	To be a cook	No	To be a cook
P4	To be a cook	No	To be a cook
P5	To be a cook	Yes	Opening your own business
P6	Working abroad	No	Working abroad
P7	Continuing to work in the tourism industry	Yes	Opening your own business
P8	Continuing to work in the tourism industry	No	Continuing to work in the tourism industry
P9	Working abroad	No	Working abroad
P10	To be military personnel	Yes	To be a cook
P11	No career plan	Yes	Continuing to work in the tourism industry
P12	Continuing to work in the tourism industry	Yes	Opening your own business
P13	No career plan	Yes	Continuing to work in the tourism industry
P14	Continuing to work in the tourism industry	Yes	Build a career in a different field

4. Discussion

This research aims to determine how Covid-19 affects the career plans of hotel business employees. For this purpose, the employees' career plans were examined before and after Covid-19. In addition, the research also examined the employees' experiences before, during, and after Covid-19. Content analysis was applied to the data obtained from employee interviews. As a result of the content analysis, the effects of covid-19 on career plan was determined as the main theme. The sub-themes are career plan before Covid-19, thoughts about the profession before Covid-19, Covid-19 process unemployment, Covid-19 process hopelessness, thoughts about the profession after Covid-19, and career plan after Covid-19. Together with the sub-themes and codes, the experiences of the employees, especially their career plans before, during, and after Covid-19, were discussed in a broad scope.

In the sub-theme of career plans before Covid-19, the employees' career plans were determined and coded. The career plans of the employees before Covid-19 vary. They have career plans such as continuing to work in the tourism sector, being a cook, working abroad, advancing in music, and being military personnel. There were two participants with no career plan. It is seen that the majority of employees before COVID-19 have career plans. Some of these career plans are within the tourism sector. Some career plans are in different fields. Understandably, employees have other career plans due to their personal goals, family wishes, and the sector's structure. These career plans are consistent with other literature studies. Çavuş and Kaya (2015) reported that most people trained in tourism want a career in the tourism industry. Dinçer et al. (2013) said that most people with training in tourism management want to continue in the sector. Yaşar and Öztürk (2023) stress that employees have expectations like working abroad and becoming military. Some employees consider tourism education and industry to be temporary steps. Hence, they have career plans and thoughts in various areas.

In the sub-theme of thoughts about the profession before Covid-19, positive and negative thoughts of the employees about their professions were examined. A significant portion of the employees (12 participants) had positive thoughts about their profession before Covid-19. Only two participants had negative thoughts. The fact that these two participants do not have career plans in the tourism sector makes this result understandable. Üzümcü et al. (2015) state that the perception of the tourism sector varies according to career opportunities. In line with this information, it makes sense that employees with a career plan in the tourism sector have positive opinions about the sector. On the contrary, employees who do not see any future in the field of tourism and do not make any plans may have negative opinions towards the sector.

The Covid-19 process unemployment sub-theme gains importance in order to understand what the employees experienced during the Covid-19 period. During the Covid-19 process, some of the employees stated that they were unemployed and that they experienced difficulties during this period. On the other hand, some employees stated that they were not unemployed or that the period of unemployment was very short. Hao et al. (2022) emphasize that employees became unemployed during the Covid-19 period and experienced economic difficulties. Demir et al. (2021b) state that the unemployment of the employees during the Covid-19 process has negative consequences on the employees. The fact that some of the employees do not remain unemployed can be understood with the internal characteristics of the hotel businesses where they work. Hotel businesses that have reduced the number of employees have preferred to perform their work with more qualified and fewer employees. Some hotel businesses remained closed for very short periods of time. In line with these reasons, it can be explained that some employees did not remain unemployed or remained unemployed for short periods of time.

In the Covid-19 process hopelessness sub-theme, most employees (10 participants) stated that they experienced hopelessness. 4 participants stated that they did not experience despair. Hu et al. (2020) show the stress and fear caused by Covid-19 as why employees feel hopeless. The fact that the employees experienced stress and fear intensely increased their hopelessness and caused anxiety. In studies such as Akgün et al. (2022), Büyükkuru (2022), and Rahimi et al. (2023), it is stated that Covid-19 causes anxiety in students and employees. It can be stated that both the individual and career resilience of employees who do not experience hopelessness are high. Employees with solid resilience experience low levels of hopelessness and anxiety. Su et al. (2022) also explain this situation with the resilience of individuals. Employees with high resilience are less affected by events. Dalgic et al. (2023) state that employees with high psychological resilience have better mental health perceptions. Therefore, employees with strong psychological resilience experience less despair.

In the sub-theme of thoughts about the profession after Covid-19, almost all employees have positive thoughts about their professions (except for 1 participant). Employees state that after Covid-19, they realized their professions and the tourism sector are essential. The fact that the employees were unemployed and experienced psychological problems during the Covid-19 period may have increased their longing for their profession. In the tourism sector, employees can have a more enjoyable and fun time as they constantly communicate with each other and customers. The fact that the employees have positive perspectives towards the sector may also be due to the severe stress and fear caused by Covid-19. However, it is important for the sector that workers continue to have positive thoughts despite experiencing unemployment or despair during the Covid-19 process. The sector has an important place in terms of the fact that the employees realize a significant part of their education period in this field and constitute the beginning of their working life. In addition, the fact that the employees live away from their friends and social lives during the Covid-19 process and then return to their work in hotel businesses may be effective in the formation of positive thoughts.

In the sub-theme of career plan after Covid-19, it was examined how the career plans of the employees were shaped and whether there were any changes. As a result of this examination, it was observed that the career plans of 7 employees did not change. On the contrary, the career plans of 7 employees changed compared to the pre-Covid-19 period. P5, P7, P12 stated that they wanted to open their own businesses after Covid-19. As a reason for this, they stated that they did not want to experience the negativities like in the Covid-19 process. Bajrami et al. (2021) state that Covid-19 creates job insecurity in employees and as a result, career changes may occur. P10, one of the participants, stated that he wanted to become a cook after Covid-19. Yapıcı et al. (2021) stated that students in the gastronomy department continue to have career aspirations. P11 and P13 among the participants stated that they wanted to continue their careers in tourism. Ng et al. (2022) state that employees think positively to continue in the sector. Participant P14 stated that she wanted to continue her career outside the tourism field. Bufquin et al. (2021) state that Covid-19 causes psychological discomfort in employees and leads to career changes.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

When the research results are evaluated in general, it is concluded that the career plans of some employees changed before and after Covid-19. The unemployment and hopelessness of the employees during the Covid-19 process are seen as the most important reason for this situation. The career plans of some employees did not change before and after Covid-19. It can be stated that these employees have high career resistance and resilience. One of the actual results of the research is that after Covid-19, employees' thoughts about their profession and the sector are positive. It can be said that Covid-19 has positive and negative effects on employees' career plans. The expectations of the employees from their careers and themselves shape this effect positively or negatively. Some suggestions have been developed in line with the results of the research. These are

- To protect employees' rights in extraordinary periods such as pandemics, legal regulations, especially professional law, should be made.
- Human resources departments should actively take responsibility for continuing employees' career plans in tourism.
- It is recommended to avoid organizational practices that may cause negative thoughts about the sector in employees.

It can be said that this research makes some contributions to the literature. First of all, it has certain originality as it comprehensively addresses the career plans of hotel business employees before and after Covid-19. The originality of the research increases because it also examines the unemployment,

hopelessness, and thoughts about the sector of employees during the Covid-19 process. This research has some limitations. This research was conducted within the scope of examining the career plans of hotel business employees before and after Covid-19. In future research, employees' career plans in different fields can be similarly investigated. Conducting similar research with tourist guides and employees in gastronomy is recommended. Similar research can be conducted in future studies by developing questions or research plans for using the quantitative method.

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