



## Examination of Career Awareness of University Students Studying in the Field of Sport Sciences\*

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### A B S T R A C T

The objective of this study is to determine if gender, age, class, athletic status, field of study (which is anticipated to be directed after graduation), and family monthly income influence university students' career awareness in the field of sports sciences. The research sample was drawn from students enrolled in the 2022-2023 academic year. The study's data collection tools were a personal information form and the "Athlete Student Career Awareness Inventory" adapted into Turkish by Gürbüz et al. (2022). Descriptive statistics (Number, Percentage, Average, Standard deviation), Athlete Student Career Awareness Inventory with normal distribution, independent t-test for pairwise comparisons (gender), and multiple comparisons (age, class, sporting status, study area) One-Way Anova test were utilized in the analysis of the research data. The Athlete Student Career Awareness Inventory, according to the findings, differs by gender in the dimension of career development barriers and sportive facilitators, by age in the dimension of athlete identity and sportive facilitators, and by class in the dimension of career development barriers, athlete identity, and sportive facilitators. It has been revealed that it differs in the dimension of athlete identity and sportive facilitators according to the factors of doing sports and work area, and it differs in the dimension of career development barriers according to the variable of family monthly revenue. Based on the study's findings, there was no significant difference in the dimension of career development self-efficacy among university students studying in the field of sports sciences. There were substantial disparities in the dimensions of athlete identity, sporting facilitators, and professional development hurdles based on gender, age, class, doing sports, working location, and family income status. As a consequence of the research, it is believed that university students studying in the field of sports sciences would get crucial awareness when deciding on a career path and that it will be a helpful study in the field of sports sciences.

**Keywords:** Athlete, Student, Career Awareness

### INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive environment, young people's employment choices and the process of deciding their professional pathways are critical aspects of their life. Career choices influence not only an individual's future economic success, but also personal satisfaction, happiness, and quality of life. At this point, the problem of student athlete career awareness is an important one that is attracting the

attention of professionals in both sports and education and is being researched. Student athletes represent two distinct yet intertwined worlds. These folks represent a distinct group of people who must balance academic accomplishment with the development of their athletic abilities. Nevertheless, striking this equilibrium extends beyond daily time management. The student-athlete may also be required to make judgments regarding establishing and accomplishing future career goals. As a result, career awareness is defined as "understanding one's

own abilities and interests, as well as the opportunities and requirements of various career fields" (Braverman et al., 2002). According to Nasir and Lin (2013), it is a notion that encompasses individuals' ability to plan and investigate their careers, as well as their understanding of job prospects and decision-making processes.

Career awareness is extremely important at the start of one's career. According to Eliason and Patrick (2008), career awareness refers to an individual's understanding of current professional prospects and career needs. Awareness encompasses knowledge of educational requirements, skill requirements, employment kinds available, work environment, and regulations and expectations of a specific area or industry. As a result, it is critical to design career awareness programs for students that include the development of specialized information about various vocations, a systematic search for professional information, and strategies to fully utilize the knowledge gathered. According to Perry and VanZandt (2006), career awareness should be the starting point before exploring career possibilities. Students must be open to the options and opportunities available to them in the job market throughout the first stage of their professional development process. They must be informed that their professional choices will have an impact on all of their other future roles. This provides pupils with direction and perspective at a young age. Counseling programs can help students understand the working world, boost knowledge of available career alternatives, and create motivating expectations for their future. As a result, career awareness emerges as a very broad process that can affect many aspects of people's life. A person's career encompasses not only elements linked to their profession, but also dimensions such as their objectives, desires, and general life desires (Akkoç, 2012). When it comes to sports and sports-related jobs, it may appear that employment opportunities in sports are plenty.

Earning more money, recognition, knowledge, power, and prestige as a result of the path taken in the application areas of sports, the time spent on this path, and the results gained during this period (Bozyigit et al., 2022). Individuals can pursue a variety of professions and careers in sports. Athlete, coach, sports educator, and manager are examples of occupations; there are numerous professional sectors such as sports photography, sports writing, sports marketing, management, and sports psychology. Furthermore, they can pursue an academic career by furthering their studies in the field of sports sciences at the graduate and doctoral levels (Güner and Hacicaferoglu, 2022). Yet, the

future professional choices and ambitions of persons who have played the role of athlete-student throughout their scholastic life, as well as whether they have taken career steps purposefully, are of interest. Examining the literature, certain research on individuals who are unable to handle their dual profession (athlete-student) scenario in sports have found that athletes have a detrimental impact after quitting sports. It has been suggested that they are unable to build effective career plans, that they lack realistic life expectations, that they are unable to obtain personal happiness in their educational lives, and that investing in the job development process has a detrimental impact on sports performance (Blann, 1985; Remer et al., 1978; Sowa and Gressard, 1983). According to various studies, many student-athletes struggle to transition from the athlete role to a professional career, and the time spent on career development processes reduces athletic performance (Baillie, 1993; Petitpas et al., 1992; Morris et al., 2021).

When studies on student-athletes are evaluated, it is clear that there are only a few studies. Our research in this area can provide student-athletes with career awareness, laying the groundwork for correct guidance in both sports and academic fields, and choosing the right career can both increase the individual's personal satisfaction and provide a way to better serve society. To make these decisions consciously, students must first understand their own strengths, interests, and values. As consequence, awareness is regarded as crucial in making job decisions.

## **METHOD**

### **Research Model and Study Group**

The survey was designed using a relational screening paradigm to determine the career knowledge of university students studying sports sciences. Relational survey studies evaluate the link between many variables without tampering with these variables (Karasar, 2016). The research population and sample comprise of 238 students, 71 female and 167 male, who were chosen from the Istanbul Topkapi University Faculty of Sports Sciences using an easily accessible sampling method.

After assessing the research's ethics, data was collected by administering face-to-face scales to students at the Faculty of Sports Sciences. "Student-Athlete Career Awareness Inventory" scale form, personal information form, Gürbüz et al. "Student-Athlete Career Awareness Inventory" was modified into Turkish by (2022). Before beginning the data

collection phase of our project, authorization was acquired from the Istanbul Topkapi University Ethics Committee, dated 10.07.2023 and numbered 2023/07.

**Data Collection Tools**

A personal information form prepared by the researcher and the Student Athlete Career Awareness Inventory were used in the study.

Student-Athlete Career Awareness Inventory

In the research, the Student Athlete Career Awareness Inventory developed by Bülent et al. (2022) was used. This scale encapsulates "Career Development Self-Efficacy" (items 1, 2, 3, 4), "Career Development Obstacles" (items 5, 6, 7, 8), "Athlete Identity" (items 9, 10, 11, 12). and "Sports Facilitators" (items 13, 14, 15) and consists of 4 sub-dimensions and 15 items in total. The scale was evaluated on a 5-point Likert type. The reliability of the SACAI Turkish form was evaluated with Cronbach Alpha internal consistency coefficients calculated on a factor basis, and the inventory was found to be a reliable measurement tool. In the study conducted by Bülent et al. (2022), it was specified that internal consistency coefficients ranged between 0.70 and 0.80.

**Analysis of Data**

Following data entry, missing and incorrect information was reviewed, and extreme values were deleted from the data set. The skewness and kurtosis coefficients, as well as the values derived by dividing the skewness and kurtosis coefficients by the standard error, were evaluated to determine that the assumption of normality was met. Because the skewness coefficient is between -1 and + 1, the distribution is normal (Büyüköztürk et al., 2007). Once the data met the assumption of normal distribution, independent sample T-test and one-way analysis of variance ANOVA were applied. As a result of ANOVA analysis, Scheffe test was performed to determine the difference between groups. SPSS 25.0 program was utilized for descriptive statistics and analysis of the data.

**RESULTS**

The findings gathered as a result of examining the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences by gender are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Examining Students' Career Awareness According to Gender Variable

	Gender	N	x	ss	t	p
Career development self-efficacy	Female	71	14,25	3,30	-	0,280
	Male	167	14,69	2,62	1,082	
Career development barriers	Female	71	9,06	2,47	-	0,001*
	Male	167	10,48	3,04	3,487	
Athlete ID	Female	71	13,69	3,98	0,650	0,516
	Male	167	13,35	3,51		
Sport facilitators	Female	71	11,96	1,91	2,935	0,004*
	Male	167	11,10	2,12		

When Table 1 is assessed, as a result of the independent t test was carried out to examine the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences according to gender, there is a significant difference between the averages of career development obstacles ( $t_{238}=3.487, p<.05$ ) and sports facilitators ( $t_{238}=2.935, p<.05$ ) for men and women. A difference was found. Career development barriers were significantly higher for men ( $X_{male}=10.48$ ) than women ( $X_{female}=9.06$ ); Sport

facilitators were significantly higher for women ( $X_{female}=11.96$ ) than men ( $X_{male}=11.10$ ).

There was no significant difference between the career development self-efficacy sub-dimension and athlete identity averages of men and women ( $t_{238}=1.082, / 0.650 p>.05$ ).

The findings obtained as a result of examining the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences according to the age variable are given in Table 2

**Table 2.** Examining Students' Career Awareness According to Age Variable

Age	n	x	Ss	f	p	Difference
Between 18-21	109	14,61	2,76	2,140	0,120	
Between 22-24	107	14,28	2,98			

Career development self-efficacy	25 and over	22	15,64	2,32			
Career development barriers	Between 18-21	109	10,08	2,99	0,226	0,798	
	Between 22-24	107	9,95	2,97			
	25 and over	22	10,41	2,70			
Athlete ID	Between 18-21	109	13,98	3,65	3,072	0,048**	1>3
	Between 22-24	107	13,21	3,55			
	25 and over	22	12,05	3,86			
Sportive Facilitators	Between 18-21	109	11,76	1,82	4,429	0,013**	1>3
	Between 22-24	107	11,10	2,21			
	25 and over	22	10,59	2,40			

When Table 2 is analysed, as a result of the one-way ANOVA test conducted to examine the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences according to the age variable, there is no significant difference between the averages of career development self-efficacy and career development barriers ( $F_{238}=2.140$ , /  $0.226$   $p>.05$ ). ); It was found that there was a significant difference between the sub-dimensions of athlete identity ( $F_{238}=3.072$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and sports facilitators ( $F_{238}=4.429$   $p<.05$ ). Scheffe test, one of the multiple comparison tests, was used to determine which groups the difference between the means was. According to the results,

athlete identity is significantly higher in the 18-21 age groups ( $F_{18-21}$  year old = 13.98,  $p <.05$ ) than in the 25 and above age groups ( $F_{25}$  and over = 12.05  $p <.05$ ); It was also determined that sports facilitators were significantly higher in the 18-21 age group ( $F_{18-21}$  years old=11.76,  $p<.05$ ) than in the 25 and over age group ( $F_{25}$  and over=10.59  $p<.05$ ).

The findings acquired as a result of examining the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences according to the class variable are shown in Table 3

**Table 3.** Examining Students' Career Awareness According to Class Variable

	Grade	n	mean	sd	f	p	difference
Career development self-efficacy	1st grade	88	14,47	2,84	1,011	0,388	
	2nd grade	20	15,00	2,27			
	3rd grade	62	14,15	3,15			
	4th grade	68	14,93	2,68			
Career development barriers	1st grade	88	9,77	2,73	2,992	0,032**	3>4
	2nd grade	20	10,95	4,10			
	3rd grade	62	10,77	2,76			
	4th grade	68	9,50	2,86			
Athlete ID	1st grade	88	14,88	3,40	7,765	0,000**	1>3 1>4
	2nd grade	20	12,70	3,87			
	3rd grade	62	12,42	3,57			
	4th grade	68	12,78	3,47			
Sportive facilitators	1st grade	88	11,98	1,92	5,177	0,002**	1>3 1>4
	2nd grade	20	11,65	1,66			
	3rd grade	62	10,81	2,25			
	4th grade	68	10,97	2,08			

When Table 3 is evaluated, as a result of the one-way ANOVA test completed to examine the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences according to the class variable, there is no significant difference between the career

development self-efficacy averages ( $F_{238} = 1,011$ ,  $p>.05$ ); It was found that there was a significant difference between the averages of career development barriers ( $F_{238}=2,992$ ,  $p<.05$ ), Athlete identity ( $F_{238}=7,765$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and Sport facilitators

( $F_{238}=5,177$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Scheffe test, one of the multiple comparison tests, was used to determine which groups the difference between the means was. According to the results, career development barriers were significantly higher in 3rd graders ( $F_{3th\ grade}=10.77$ ,  $p<.05$ ) than in 4th graders ( $F_{4th\ grade}=9.50$   $p<.05$ ); Athlete identity was higher in 1st grades ( $F_{1.grade}=14.88$ ,  $p<.05$ ) than in 3rd grades ( $F_{3.grade}=12.42$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and 4th grades ( $F_{4.grade}=10.78$ ). ,  $p<.05$ ) is significantly higher; In terms of sports facilitators, 1st graders

( $F_{1.grade}=11.98$ ,  $p<.05$ ) had higher scores than 3rd graders ( $F_{3.grade}=10.81$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and 4th graders ( $F_{4.grade}=10.97$ ).  $p<.05$ ) was found to be significantly higher.

The findings obtained as a result of examining the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences according to the variable of doing sports are pointed out in Table 4

**Table 4.** Examining Students' Career Awareness According to the Variable of Doing Sports

	Status of Doing Sports	n	mean	sd	f	p	Difference
Career development self-efficacy	I do sports with a license	78	15,13	2,82	2,836	0,061	
	I do it for free time.	130	14,38	2,74			
	I do not do sports	30	13,83	3,13			
Career development barriers	I do sports with a license	78	10,60	3,23	2,676	0,071	
	I do it for free time.	130	9,66	2,75			
	I do not do sports	30	10,33	2,84			
Athlete ID	I do sports with a license	78	14,91	3,53	15,430	0,000**	1>2
	I do it for free time.	130	13,16	3,29			1>3
	I do not do sports	30	10,93	3,89			2>3
Sport facilitators	I do sports with a license	78	11,87	1,88	10,828	0,000**	1>3
	I do it for free time.	130	11,39	1,98			2>3
	I do not do sports	30	9,87	2,42			

When Table 4 is scrutinized, as a result of the one-way ANOVA test done to examine the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences according to the variable of doing sports, career development self-efficacy ( $F_{238}=2.836$ ,  $p>.05$ ) and career development barriers ( $F_{238}=2.676$ ,  $p$ .  $<.05$ ) There is no significant difference between the means; It was found that there was a significant difference between the averages of athlete identity ( $F_{238}=15.430$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and sports facilitators ( $F_{238}=10.828$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Scheffe test, one of the multiple comparison tests, was used to determine which groups the difference between the means was. According to the results, athlete identity, I do sport with a license variable (I do sports with a license= $14.91$ ,  $p<.05$ ), I do sports

for free time (I do sports for free time= $13.16$   $p<.05$ ) and I don't do it (I don't do it= $10.93$ ,  $p<.05$ ). ) is significantly higher than the variables; The variable of sport facilitators, I do sports with a license (I do sports with a license= $11.87$ ,  $p<.05$ ) is significantly higher than the variable I do not do it (I do sports with a license= $9.87$ ,  $p<.05$ ); It was determined that the variable "I do it for free time" ( $F_{free\ time}=11.39$ ,  $p<.05$ ) was significantly higher than the variable "I don't do sports" ( $F_{I\ don't\ do\ it}=9.87$ ,  $p<.05$ ).

The findings obtained as a result of examining the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences according to the variable of the field of study when they graduate are given in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Examining Students' Career Awareness According to the Field of Study Considered When Graduating

	Field of study he/she intends to work on when he/she graduates	n	mean	sd	F	p	difference
Career development self-efficacy	Coaching	62	14,79	2,76	0,251	0,909	
	Physical education teacher	90	14,56	2,45			

	Sports Management	23	14,35	3,86			
	Police-Military Service	39	14,26	2,87			
	Academics	24	14,67	3,38			
Career development barriers	Coaching	62	9,60	3,04	0,853	0,493	
	Physical education teacher	90	10,26	2,86			
	Sports Management	23	10,00	2,92			
	Police-Military Service	39	10,56	3,05			
	Academics	24	9,71	2,91			
Athlete ID	Coaching	62	14,63	3,72	2,754	0,029**	1>4
	Physical education teacher	90	13,37	3,19			
	Sports Management	23	13,17	3,24			
	Police-Military Service	39	12,56	3,76			
	Academics	24	12,46	4,66			
Sport facilitators	Coaching	62	12,10	1,63	3,201	0,014**	1>4
	Physical education teacher	90	11,27	1,93			
	Sports Management	23	10,83	2,33			
	Police-Military Service	39	10,79	2,24			
	Academics	24	11,21	2,80			

When Table 5 is evaluated, as a result of the one-way ANOVA test conducted to examine the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences according to the field of study variable, career development self-efficacy ( $F_{238}=0.251$ ,  $p>.05$ ) and career development barriers ( $F_{238}=0.853$ ,  $p>.05$ ) There is no significant difference between the means; It was found that there was a significant difference between the averages of athlete identity ( $F_{238}=2,754$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and sports facilitators ( $F_{238}=3,201$ ,  $p<.05$ ). Scheffe test, one of the multiple comparison tests, was performed in order to determine which groups the

difference between the averages was between. According to athlete identity, the Coaching variable ( $F_{Coaching}=14.63$ ,  $p<.05$ ) is significantly higher than the Police-Military ( $F_{Police-Military}=12.56$ ,  $p<.05$ ) variables; It was determined that sports facilitators ( $F_{Coaching} = 12.10$ ,  $p <.05$ ) were significantly higher than the Police-Military ( $F_{police-military service} = 10.79$ ,  $p <.05$ ) variable.

The findings gathered as a result of examining the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences according to the income status variable are given in Table 6

**Table 6.** Examining Students' Career Awareness According to Income Status Variable

	<i>Income status</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>sd</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>difference</i>
Career development self-efficacy	Less than 5 thousand	62	14,63	2,69	1,138	0,334	
	5 thousand - 10 thousand	105	14,38	2,87			
	10 thousand - 20 thousand	57	14,49	3,06			
	More than 20 thousand	14	15,86	2,18			
Career development barriers	Less than 5 thousand	62	9,94	2,41	3,526	0,016**	4>1 4>2
	5 thousand - 10 thousand	105	9,66	2,90			
	10 thousand - 20 thousand	57	10,39	3,35			
	More than 20 thousand	14	12,21	2,94			
Athlete ID	Less than 5 thousand	62	13,94	3,55	1,626	0,184	
	5 thousand - 10 thousand	105	13,56	3,54			
	10 thousand - 20 thousand	57	12,58	4,10			
	More than 20 thousand	14	14,07	2,53			
Sportive facilitators	Less than 5 thousand	62	11,48	1,65	0,293	0,830	
	5 thousand - 10 thousand	105	11,31	2,07			
	10 thousand - 20 thousand	57	11,40	2,55			
	More than 20 thousand	14	10,93	2,09			

When Table 6 is analysed, as a result of the one-way ANOVA test conducted to examine the career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences according to the income variable, career development self-efficacy ( $F_{238}=1,138, p>.05$ ), athlete identity ( $F_{238}=1,626, p>.05$ ) and sports facilitators ( $F_{238}=0.293, p>.05$ ); there was a significant difference between the averages of career development barriers ( $F_{238}=3.526, p<.05$ ). Between which groups does the difference between the means occur? According to the results of the analysis conducted to determine career development obstacles, there are more than 20 thousand variables ( $F_{\text{more than 20 thousand}} = 12.21, p<.05$ ), less than 5 thousand variables ( $F_{\text{less than 5 thousand}} = 9.94, p<.05$ ) and 5-10 thousand variables ( $F_{5-10 \text{ thousand}} = 9.66, p<.05$ ) was determined to be significantly higher than the variance.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this study, When the study's findings were reviewed, it was discovered that there was no significant difference in the career awareness of students studying sports sciences based on gender. This result indicates that pupils' levels of career awareness are comparable. When the literature was examined, studies that were not similar to the findings of this study were discovered. Aybek (2023) observed that men scored higher than women on career development self-efficacy and also scored higher on career development barriers. According to Ege's research, the participants' career planning levels were investigated according to their gender, and there was a statistically significant result in the sub-dimension of the career planning scale. While no significant difference was found in our study's findings, studies in the literature typically demonstrate that men have higher levels of career planning, difficulties, and professional growth than women, and this is because they feel more responsibility.

Athlete identification and sports facilitators were considerably greater in those aged 18-21 compared to individuals aged 25 and up in the age variable. When the research was evaluated, it was discovered that older students had higher career development skills than younger students in a study conducted on university students by Healy et al. (1987). According to a different study conducted by Yaşar (2019), older persons with undergraduate education in sports sciences had stronger professional career awareness than other groups. Our findings, as well as those found in the literature, demonstrate considerable

disparities between age groups in many sub-dimensions. Individuals with an athletic identity among sports science students are aware of professional awareness at a young age, and sports facilitators help to establish awareness at a young age.

Career development barriers are higher in 3rd graders than in 4th graders, according to the grade variable of career awareness of students studying in the field of sports sciences; it was determined that the number of sports facilitators with an athlete identity was higher in 1st graders than in 3rd and 4th grades. In a similar way Aybek (2023) conducted a career awareness study on students from the Faculty of Sports Sciences; the athlete identity stated that third-grade students received a lower score than other grades, while sports facilitators stated that second grade students received a higher score than other grades, and third-grade students received a lower score than first-grade students. According to the findings of a study conducted by Güner and Hacıferoğlu (2022), the professional awareness sub-dimension was high in first grade students and above-medium in second, third, and fourth grade students.

Students' career awareness was found to be better in those with an athlete identity than in individuals who spend their spare time with sports and individuals who do not do sports, according to the variable of doing sports. Similarly, it has been discovered that sports facilitators are more prevalent in people with an athlete identity than in people who spend their free time doing sports or people who do not play sports. According to these findings, licensed individuals have a higher level of professional awareness than other individuals (whether they participate in sports as a leisure activity or not), with a different expression coming from the sports business. When the studies in the literature are examined, it is monitored that they support the results of our study (Semiz, 2018; Lavalée and Wylleman, 2000).

It has been discovered that when sports science students graduate, their career awareness is significantly greater than the area of study of athlete identity and sports facilitators, and their career awareness is significantly higher than the field of police-military service. According to this result, students who will graduate from the subject of sports sciences aspire to work as coaches in their own professional organizations. Although research on the subject is scarce, it is clear from observation that students graduating from the discipline of sports

sciences tend to work in law enforcement or the military. Hence, it can be stated that working as a coach is a priority among the fields in which students specialize in the field of sports sciences, whereas in other fields of study, it is either out of necessity or because they wish to achieve economic freedom quickly.

The income level of more than 20 thousand was substantially greater than the income levels of 5 and 5-10 thousand in the career development hurdles sub-dimension of sports science students' career awareness according to family income status. Individuals with a high family income suffer higher career development barriers than those with a low income, according to the research findings. It has been discovered that the research findings in the literature are similar to the findings in our study. According to Güner and Hacicaferoglu (2022), the lowest average scores in the professional development aptitude sub-dimension are at the upper-intermediate level for all students, regardless of family income, and the highest average scores in the vocational readiness sub-dimension are at the high level for students with a family monthly income of 6001 TL or higher. Çetin and Karalar (2016) investigated the job perspectives of Generation X, Y, and Z students in their study. According to research findings, students from lower-income homes had greater career perceptions than students from better-income families.

#### **Conflict of Interest**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

#### **Ethical Approval**

For this type of study, formal consent is not required.

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