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Career Stress and the Role of Family Among Students of the Faculty of Sports SciencesEdanur Demirci¹, Tolga Eski²**ARTICLE INFORMATION**

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Volume: 6, No: 1**Pages:** 138-150**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to examine the relationship between career stress and the influence of family on career choice among students of the Faculty of Sports Sciences by evaluating these two factors in terms of different variables. The correlational survey model, one of the quantitative research methods, was used in the research model. The sample of the study consists of 249 students, who are first and second grade students of Kastamonu University Faculty of Sports Sciences. As data collection tools, the Career Stress Scale (CSS), adapted into Turkish by Özden and Sertel-Berk (2017), and the Family Influence on Career Choice Scale (FICCS), adapted into Turkish by Özünlü and Bacanlı (2015), were used. The data were analyzed using the SPSS 20 program, with descriptive statistics, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test, non-parametric tests such as the Mann-Whitney U Test, Kruskal-Wallis Test, Spearman Correlation Test and Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency analysis. According to the analysis of the sub-dimensions of the Career Stress Scale, significant differences were observed in grade variables ($p < .05$). According to the analysis of the sub-dimensions of the Family Influence on Career Choice Scale, significant differences were found in terms of gender, grade, and paternal education variables ($p < .05$). No significant difference was found in the relationship analysis conducted between the career stress and the influence of family on career choice among students ($r = .053$; $p > 0.05$). In conclusion, it was observed that career stress influences students' career choices, while the role of the family was not. It was noted that students chose the Faculty of Sports Sciences based on their preferences. It may be recommended that departments provide training to improve their professional self-confidence and work to reduce stress.

Keywords: Career Stress, Career Choice, Family Influence, Sports Sciences, University Students.

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INTRODUCTION

In life, individuals undergo various processes to achieve specific goals. Career choice is one of the crucial steps in this process, and it has become increasingly important due to changing job conditions. Career choice secures financial independence and directly impacts personal satisfaction and success. It is widely recognized that the most influential factors in career choice are an individual's interests, abilities, and social background (Türkkahraman & Şahin, 2010). The contribution of university years in determining these factors is substantial. University education is critical in shaping individuals' careers and setting their goals. The skills and knowledge acquired during this period prepare individuals for professional life. At the same time, this period is also a time of self-discovery. Career development and career stress are critical factors that may arise as challenges during this process of self-discovery.

Career stress is the anxiety, pressure, and difficulty experienced by individuals when choosing a profession. It has been described as a psychological and physical state that negatively affects the individual and their surroundings (Choi et al., 2011; Emirel & Bozkurt, 2022). Along with career stress, feelings of uncertainty can diminish self-confidence and narrow one's perspective. Research on career stress has shown that it significantly affects individuals' quality of life. The responsibility of securing a job and the increasing variability in professions have been noted as key factors contributing to stress (Bozyiğit & Gökbaraz, 2020; Güler et al., 2023; Gümüştekin & Gültekin, 2015). Another significant variable that influences the limitations caused by career stress is the family factor. Parents' desire to ensure their child's future or their expectation that the child will pursue the profession they envision can create pressure that affects career choices.

Studies have shown that excessive parental involvement in career decisions increases decision-making difficulties, impacts career competence, and shapes the individual's self-awareness based on parental guidance (Eraslan Çapan & Korkut Owen, 2020; Marcionetti & Rossier, 2017; Öztürk, 2014; Taş & Özmen, 2019). In addition to these two significant factors, societal expectations of what careers should be pursued can further complicate the situation. This is especially true for students pursuing careers in sports, as they may not be fully aware of the breadth of opportunities within the field, leading to increased stress and influence from parental expectations.

Career stress and the family effect that occurs in this process are two important psychosocial variables that directly affect the professional orientation process of the individual. Career stress is generally used to measure the uncertainty, conflict, and pressure experienced by the individual in the career decision-making process, while the family effect is used to evaluate the effect of family members' expectations, guidance, and support levels on an individual's career decisions. In this context, Holland's Personality Types Theory argues that making career choices suitable for individuals' personality traits will increase career satisfaction; maladaptive choices can increase stress levels (Holland, 1997, as cited in Spokane et al., 2002). On the other hand, Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), based on Bandura's concepts of self-efficacy and expectation of results, suggests that an individual's career orientation is shaped by both intrinsic motivations and external factors such as family and peers (Lent et al., 1994). Another theory, Donald Super's Developmental Career Theory, sees the career development of individuals as a lifelong process. In particular, the Life-Span, Life-Space approach emphasizes not only the professional development of the individual but also his relationship with other roles in his life (e.g., student, parent, employee, citizen) (Super, 1980). Especially in young individuals, the conflict between family expectations and individual interests and talents can be one of the primary sources of career stress. For this reason, the data obtained through these two scales allow us to analyze the career development processes of individuals in a multidimensional way. At the same time, they provide an important theoretical

basis for determining the direction of vocational guidance services.

However, in the current literature, there are limited studies that examine the family influence and professional awareness levels in the career choice processes of students studying in the field of sports. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature by revealing the family factors that affect the career decisions of students in physical education and sports sciences and the uncertainties they experience regarding this process. Thus, it aims to contribute to both families and educators in managing this process more healthily by determining the specific problems encountered by teacher candidates who show a career orientation in sports.

Understanding the differences in how students navigate their career paths, their confidence in their professional choices, and the role of family support is crucial. With this in mind, this article aims to examine the career stress on career choice and the influence of family support, considering various variables and determining whether there is a relationship between family support and career stress. This article seeks answers to the following questions.

H 1: Does family influence on career choice?

H 2: Does career stress have an impact on career choice?

H 3: Is there a significant relationship between family influence on career choice and career stress?

METHOD

Research Ethics

Prior to the start of our study, ethical approval was granted by the Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Board of Kastamonu University as the fifth decision of meeting number 4 dated 03.04.2024.

Research Design

The correlational survey model, a quantitative research method, was employed in this study. Correlational survey models aim to explore the relationships between two or more variables and to reveal the effects of these relationships (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009).

Participants

The study population consists of 909 students studying at Kastamonu University Faculty of Sports Sciences in the 2023-2024 Academic Year. The sample group of the study consists of 249 sports science students, 121 females and 128 males, selected by purposive sampling method from within the universe. The preferred purposive sampling method is seen as —the shortest way to obtain data in a fast and cheap way (Patton, 1987).

Table 1

Statistical Distributions of Participants Based on Demographic Characteristics

Variable	Group	n	%
Gender	Female	121	48.6
	Male	128	51.4
	Total	249	100.0
Age	19 and under	86	34.5
	20 and above	163	65.5
	Total	249	100.0
Grade Level	1 st Grade	114	45.8
	2 nd Grade	135	54.2
	Total	249	100.0
Department	Physical Education and Sports Teaching	28	11.2
	Coaching Education	112	45.0
	Sports Management	109	43.8
	Total	249	100.0
Perceived Family Income	Low	20	8.0
	Middle	204	81.9
	High	25	10.0
	Total	249	100.0
Perceived Personal Income	Low	77	30.9
	Middle	154	61.8
	High	18	7.2
	Total	249	100.0
Maternal Education Level	Illiterate or Primary School	99	39.8
	Middle School	70	28.1
	High School	62	24.9
	University or Higher	18	7.2
	Total	249	100.0
Paternal Education Level	Illiterate or Primary School	64	25.7
	Middle School	63	25.3
	High School	90	36.1
	University or Higher	32	12.9
	Total	249	100.0

Table 1 shows that out of the 249 participants, 48.6% are female (n = 121) and 51.4% are male (n = 128). It was determined that 34.5% of participants (n = 86) were aged 19 or younger, while 65.5% (n = 163) were aged 20 or older. The number of first-grade students was 114 (45.8%), and the number of second-grade students was 135 (54.2%). The department with the most participants was Coaching Education (45.0%, n = 112), while Physical Education and Sports Teaching had the fewest participants (11.2%, n = 28). Most participants rated their family income as middle (81.9%, n = 204), and a similar trend was observed for personal income, with the middle-income group being the most represented (61.8%, n = 154). Regarding parents' education, most mothers had either no formal education or only a primary school education (39.8%, n = 99), while the most common level of education among fathers was high school (36.1%, n = 90).

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form: This form includes questions on gender, age, grade level, department, perceived family income, perceived personal income (the student's income), maternal and parental education level.

Career Stress Scale (CSS): The Career Stress Scale used in this research was developed by Choi et al. (2011) to measure the stress and difficulties experienced by university students regarding their career choices. The scale was adapted into Turkish by Özden and Sertel Berg (2017). It consists of 20 items divided into three sub-dimensions (career ambiguity & lacking information, external conflict and employment pressure). Respondents are asked to rate the degree to which they relate to the statements on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly Disagree (1)" to "Strongly Agree (5)." The lowest possible score on the scale is 20, and the highest is 100, with higher scores indicating a higher level of career stress. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient calculated on the data collected within the scope of this study was .929 for the "Career Ambiguity & Lacking Information" subscale, .792 for the "External Conflict" subscale and .881 for the "Employment Pressure" subscale. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient obtained from the total score of the scale was determined as .949.

Family Influence on Career Choice Scale (FICCS): Originally developed by Fouad et al. (2010) and adapted into Turkish by Özünlü and Bacanlı (2015), the Family Influence on Career Choice Scale is a 21-item, 5-point Likert scale. It includes four sub-dimensions: Informational Support, Financial Support, Family Expectations, and Values & Beliefs. The items were developed based on research findings and suggestions in the literature on the influence of family in career decision-making. Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient calculated on the data collected within the scope of this study was .909 for the "Informational Support" subscale, .512 for the "Financial Support" subscale, .809 for the "Family Expectations" subscale and .847 for the "Values & Beliefs" subscale. In addition, Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient obtained from the total score of the scale was found to be .824.

Data Collection Process

Data were collected face-to-face from Faculty of Sports Sciences students during the Spring semester of the 2023-2024 Academic Year. Before data collection, participants were informed about the research topic and the scales they were asked to complete. Participants contributed to the study voluntarily. Data were collected by the principal investigator.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the SPSS 20 statistical software package. Frequency and percentage analyses were performed for the variables. Kolmogorov Smirnov test was applied first in relation to the normality distribution of the data in the analyzes. Since the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test indicated that the data were not normally distributed ($p < .05$), non-parametric tests were applied. The Mann-Whitney U test was used for gender, age, and grade variables, while the Kruskal-Wallis test was used for department, perceived family income, perceived personal income, maternal education, and parental education variables. When the Kruskal-Wallis test was significant, Dunn's Test with Bonferroni Correction was applied, which is one of the post hoc tests. The reliability of the scales was checked using Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency analysis. The effect size for pairwise comparisons was classified according to the rank biserial correlation and classified as 0.20 small, 0.50 medium and 0.80 large (Green & Salkind, 2005).

FINDINGS

In this section, the findings obtained as a result of the analysis of the data collected from the participants through data collection tools and comments on the findings are given.

Table 2

Comparison of Career Stress and Family Influence on Career Choice Scores according to Participants' Gender Variables

Scale	Sub-dimensions	Gender	n	Md	\bar{X}	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Career Stress Scale	Career Ambiguity & Lacking Information	Female	121	2.10	129.65	15688.00	7181.00	.321
		Male	128	2.10	120.60	15437.00		
	External Conflict	Female	121	2.00	127.12	15381.50	7487.50	.650
		Male	128	2.00	123.00	15743.50		
	Employment Pressure	Female	121	2.83	133.90	16202.50	6666.50	.057
		Male	128	2.67	116.58	14922.50		
Total	Female	121	2.35	131.30	15887.00	6982.00	.180	
	Male	128	2.28	119.05	15238.00			
Family Influence on Career Choice Scale	Informational Support	Female	121	3.88	125.16	15144.50	7724.50	.972
		Male	128	3.88	124.85	15980.50		
	Financial Support	Female	121	3.67	129.82	15708.50	7160.50	.301
		Male	128	3.67	120.44	15416.50		
	Family Expectations	Female	121	2.25	123.20	14907.50	7526.50	.701
		Male	128	2.25	126.70	16217.50		
	Values & Beliefs	Female	121	3.00	115.60	13987.00	6606.00	.044*
		Male	128	3.33	133.89	17138.00		
Total	Female	121	3.33	123.18	14904.00	7523.50	.698	
	Male	128	3.38	126.72	16220.00			

*p < .05

Table 2 shows no significant difference between genders in the sub-dimensions of career ambiguity and lacking information, external conflict, and employment pressure. However, a significant difference was found between females (Md= 3.00, n= 121) and males (Md= 3.33, n= 128) in the values and beliefs sub-dimension of the Family Influence on Career Choice Scale, with females scoring lower than males (U = 6606.00; p < .05, r = -0.13; small).

According to the analysis results on the influence of age on career stress and family influence on career choice, no significant differences were observed in the sub-dimensions of career ambiguity and lacking information, external conflict, employment pressure informational support, financial support, family expectations, and values and beliefs. It was determined that age does not significantly impact these scales.

Table 3

Comparison of Career Stress and Family Influence on Career Choice Scores according to Participants' Grade Level Variables

Scale	Sub-dimensions	Grade Level	n	Md	\bar{X}	Sum of Ranks	U	p
Career Stress Scale	Career Ambiguity & Lacking Information	1 st Grade	114	1.95	116.50	13281.00	6726.000	.87
		2 nd Grade	135	2.40	132.18	17844.00		
	External Conflict	1 st Grade	114	1.75	114.66	13071.50	6516.500	.037*
		2 nd Grade	135	2.00	133.73	18053.50		
	Employment Pressure	1 st Grade	114	2.50	119.12	13580.00	7025.000	.236
		2 nd Grade	135	3.00	129.96	17545.00		
	Total	1 st Grade	114	2.13	116.44	13274.00	6719.000	.85
		2 nd Grade	135	2.50	132.23	17851.00		
Family Influence on Career Choice Scale	Informational Support	1 st Grade	114	4.00	127.01	14479.50	7465.500	.684
		2 nd Grade	135	3.88	123.30	16645.50		
	Financial Support	1 st Grade	114	3.67	124.41	14183.00	7628.000	.905
		2 nd Grade	135	3.67	125.50	16942.00		
	Family Expectations	1 st Grade	114	2.00	112.54	12829.50	6274.500	.012*
		2 nd Grade	135	2.50	135.52	18295.50		
	Values & Beliefs	1 st Grade	114	3.00	122.82	14002.00	7447.000	.660
		2 nd Grade	135	3.33	126.84	17123.00		
Total	1 st Grade	114	3.33	121.22	13819.00	7264.000	.446	
	2 nd Grade	135	3.38	128.19	17306.00			

*p < .05

According to findings in Table 3, significant differences were found between first grade (Md= 1.75, n= 114) and second grade (Md= 2.00, n= 135) in the sub-dimensions of external conflict (U = 6516.50; p < .05, r = .13; Small). At the same time, a significant difference was found between first grade (Md= 2.00, n= 114) and second grade (Md= 2.50, n= 135) in the sub-dimension of family expectations (U = 6274.50; p < .05, r = .16; Small). Second-grade students reported higher scores in these sub-dimensions compared to first-grade students, indicating that second-grade students experience more external conflict and perceive higher family expectations.

Table 4

Comparison of Career Stress and Family Influence on Career Choice Scores according to Participants' Paternal Education Level

Scale	Sub-dimensions	Paternal Education Level	n	Mean Rank	sd	χ^2	p	Sig.
Career Stress Scale	Career Ambiguity & Lacking Information	Illiterate or Primary School ^a	64	137.25	3	5.924	.115	-
		Middle School ^b	63	133.27				
		High School ^c	90	111.45				
		University or Higher ^d	32	122.33				
	External Conflict	Illiterate or Primary School ^a	64	135.15	3	2.124	.547	-
		Middle School ^b	63	125.45				

Family Influence on Career Choice Scale	Employment Pressure	High School ^c	90	118.17	3	1.349	.718	-
		University or Higher ^d	32	123.02				
		Illiterate or Primary School ^a	64	132.57				
		Middle School ^b	63	123.68				
	Total	High School ^c	90	119.37	3	3.424	.331	-
		University or Higher ^d	32	128.28				
		Illiterate or Primary School ^a	64	135.76				
		Middle School ^b	63	128.99				
	Informational Support	High School ^c	90	114.82	3	4.615	.202	-
		University or Higher ^d	32	124.25				
		Illiterate or Primary School ^a	64	109.25				
		Middle School ^b	63	125.72				
	Financial Support	High School ^c	90	133.64	3	9.757	.021*	a<c
		University or Higher ^d	32	130.77				
		Illiterate or Primary School ^a	64	104.65				
		Middle School ^b	63	122.10				
	Family Expectations	High School ^c	90	140.91	3	1.117	.773	-
		University or Higher ^d	32	126.67				
		Illiterate or Primary School ^a	64	125.35				
		Middle School ^b	63	121.55				
Values & Beliefs	High School ^c	90	122.91	3	6.316	.097	-	
	University or Higher ^d	32	136.98					
	Illiterate or Primary School ^a	64	116.40					
	Middle School ^b	63	115.56					
Total	High School ^c	90	128.63	3	8.424	.038*	a<c a<d	
	University or Higher ^d	32	150.56					
	Illiterate or Primary School ^a	64	106.49					
	Middle School ^b	63	120.14					

Note. *p < .05; a = Illiterate or Primary School; b = Middle School; c = High School; d = University or Higher.

Upon examining Table 4 no significant difference was found in the sub-dimensions of informational support, family expectations, and values and beliefs within the Family Influence Scale on Career Choice based on paternal educational level. However, a significant difference was observed in the financial support sub-dimension ($\chi^2(3, N=249) = 9.757, p < .021, \epsilon^2 =$

.04; Small). After applying Dunn's Test with Bonferroni Correction for multiple comparisons indicated that this difference was between the A<C groups. The Kruskal-Wallis test, applied generally to the Family Influence Scale on Career Choice related to paternal educational level, revealed a significant difference ($\chi^2(3, N= 249) = 8.424, p = .038, \epsilon^2 = .03$; Small). Applying Dunn's Test with Bonferroni Correction, group comparisons showed that this difference existed between the A<C and A<D groups. No significant difference was found in the career ambiguity and lacking information, external conflict, and employment pressure sub-dimensions of the Career Stress Scale.

According to the analysis results regarding the age variable in relation to the sub-dimensions of family influence on career choice and career stress, no significant differences were observed in the sub-dimensions of informational support, financial support, family expectations, values and beliefs, career uncertainty and lacking information, external conflict, and job search pressure. It was determined that the age variable did not have a significant impact on the scales, and therefore, no table was included. Additionally, the analyses conducted for the variables of academic department, family income, personal income, and maternal education level revealed insufficient sample size. Consequently, these variables were excluded from the study.

Table 5

Correlation Analysis Performed on Career Stress and Family Influence on Career Choice

Variables	r	p
Career Stress		
Family Influence on Career Choice	.053	.402

When Table 5 is examined, it was seen that there was no positive and significant relationship in the Spearman Correlation test, which was conducted to reveal whether there was a relationship between career stress in students' career choice and family influence in career choice ($r = .053, p > .05$).

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between family influence on career choice and career stress among students of the Faculty of Sports Sciences. In addition to this investigation, findings related to variables such as gender, grade level, and paternal education level, and the results of the correlational analysis between the two scales, were also presented.

The results showed no significant difference between males and females regarding family support in career choice, particularly in the sub-dimensions of informational support, financial support, and family expectations. This suggests that families provide similar levels of support regardless of gender. This finding aligns with research by Guan et al. (2016), which demonstrated the positive impact of family support on career decisions across genders.

However, a significant difference was found in the Values and Beliefs sub-dimension, indicating that societal norms and gender roles may create differing expectations in career decisions. Females, in particular, may place more emphasis on family values in their career choices than males. Previous research by Taş and Özmen (2019) supports this finding, showing that women prioritize family support more than men when making career decisions. Moreover, studies by Lamsa, Sakinen, and Turjanmaa (2000) suggest that gender-specific values influence career paths.

Regarding Career Stress, no significant differences were found between genders in the sub-dimensions of career ambiguity and lacking information, external conflict, and

employment pressure. This indicates that both males and females experience similar levels of career stress. Previous studies have yielded similar findings (Bayrakçeken & Buztepe, 2021; Güner et al., 2024), suggesting that career-related pressures and opportunities in the labor market affect both genders equally.

The findings showed that age did not significantly affect family influence or career stress. This indicates that family support and career stress can occur at any age, regardless of whether individuals are younger or older university students. Esen (2019) reached a similar conclusion in her research, while Özgeldi and Kılıç (2019) found some variations, suggesting that further studies are needed. The homogeneity and narrow distribution of the participants' ages may have reduced the likelihood of detecting potential age-related differences. Consequently, it can be concluded that age alone may not be a determining factor.

The findings related to the grade level variable revealed a significant difference was found in the family expectations sub-dimension. Although statistically significant, the effect size ($\epsilon^2 = .02$) was small, indicating limited practical implications. This may be explained by the increasing pressure students face as they advance to higher grades, such as finding a job, making career decisions, and transitioning into professional life. As a result, they may feel family expectations more intensely. Regarding career stress, the significant difference found in the external conflict sub-dimension suggests that individuals may be more influenced by society, social environment, and family, leading to increased stress levels. Factors such as uncertain career paths, competitive job markets, and concerns about unemployment may expose students to greater external pressures. Several studies align with these findings and support similar conclusions (Picker-Roesch & Lang, 2024; Wang, 2023).

According to the results obtained from the paternal education variable, a significant difference was found in the financial support sub-dimension and the overall scale score. This suggests that the father's role is significant in career decision-making. When the parent has a higher level of education, the associated financial means are likely to be greater, allowing for increased support to the individual, which may positively influence career decisions. Consistent with this study, previous research has also demonstrated that educational attainment is important in this context (Obot et al., 2020; Özcan & Sarıoğlu Kemer, 2021).

The study had no statistically significant relationship between family influence and career stress. This finding shows that the family factor is not a direct source of stress on students. However, it can be said that family expectations have both positive and negative aspects. On the positive side, it is possible for students who grow up in supportive and encouraging family structures to increase their self-confidence and facilitate the process of determining their career goals more clearly. This situation can have a reducing effect on career stress by improving students' decision-making skills. From a negative point of view, the high level of expectation of families or the fact that they are overly directive in their career choice can increase the level of pressure and stress in students. In particular, directing the student to an area far from their interests and abilities can cause negative situations such as indecision, anxiety and burnout. In this context, the absence of a significant relationship in the statistical analysis suggests that although the direct effect of the family effect on stress is limited, its indirect effects should not be ignored. Overall, the findings highlight the complex and independent nature of family influence and career stress among sports science students and indicate the need for individualized and context-sensitive career support strategies.

Seminars and informational sessions involving families could be organized to support students in both realizing their individual potential and coping more effectively with stress factors originating from their families. In addition, mentorship systems may be established to guide students through their career planning process, and psychological counseling services could be strengthened to help develop coping strategies against family-related pressures. Such

holistic approaches would promote both greater autonomy in students' career decisions and a healthier balance in their relationships with their families. Furthermore, while this study aligns with the findings of some previous research, it contradicts others. Considering the limitation regarding the class level of the participants, future studies could be conducted across different universities and academic levels to examine potential regional differences in this area.

Limitations

The research is limited to the data be collected from students' study in Kastamonu University in the 2023 – 2024 Academic Year.

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