

# Examination of Postgraduate Theses on Career in Sports Sciences in Turkey

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** In the historical process, research in the field of career development of athletes has evolved from research on the termination of sports career to studies in which the career is addressed towards a more holistic, life-long and multi-level approach<sup>26</sup>. In this context, the career phenomenon, which has been the research topic of many sports scientists for years, still maintains its popularity. In addition to many scientific articles, it is known that career issues are examined in postgraduate theses. Therefore, it is very important to examine the postgraduate theses investigating the career issue and to make inferences as a result of this, as it will contribute to the literature.

**Aim:** The aim of this research is to examine the postgraduate theses on career in sports sciences in Turkey in terms of parameters such as thesis level, publication year, data collection tool, purpose and result.

**Methods:** This research was designed using the systematic review method. Between 03.04.2022 and 17.04.2022, a total of 37 theses were reached as a result of the search made by scanning the keywords "kariyer" in Turkish and "career" in English by filtering the word "Sport" on the database of the National Thesis Center. As a result of the evaluations made, 34 postgraduate theses were included in the research. In order to record the data obtained by the researchers, using the Excel 2016 (Microsoft Office) program, the information obtained according to the classification made as the author of the research, the thesis level, the year of publication, the participant group, the data collection tool, the purpose and the result were recorded in the appropriate place in the table. Afterwards, the findings of the research were presented in graphics and tables.

**Result:** According to the research findings, it has been determined that there are 6 doctorate and 28 master's theses on career in sports sciences in Turkey (Graph 1). In addition, it was determined that the most published postgraduate theses were published in 2021 (Graph 2). Also according to the research findings, it has been determined that Semi-structured Interview Form is mostly used as a data collection tool in postgraduate theses published on career in sports sciences in Turkey (Table 1). When the participant groups of the studies were examined, it was determined that mostly athletes, sports managers, academicians and students studying in the field of sports sciences participated as participants (Table 2). When the theses included in the research were examined in terms of purpose and result, it was determined that subjects such as career planning, barriers encountered in career planning, career plans of athletes, dual career, professional career plans of sports science students, career satisfaction, the relationship of career with other subjects such as emotional intelligence and life satisfaction were frequently investigated (Table 2).

**Conclusion:** As a result, it can be said that the number of postgraduate theses on careers in sports sciences is increasing in Turkey. In addition, it was determined that the researches were carried out with different participant groups, and in this context, it can be said that the researches have a wide spectrum. In addition to these results, it can be said that graduate theses also have very rich content in terms of purpose and results.

**Keywords:** Athletes, Career, Sports Science

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of career stands out as one of the concepts that has started to gain importance especially in the human resources department. Today's working life has accelerated the popularity of the career phenomenon. This situation causes this concept to become more and more complex<sup>1</sup>. The concept of career, which is used to advance in daily language, for experiences related to profession, business life and success<sup>2</sup>, has been defined in different ways by many researchers. When the definitions of the researchers about the concept of career are examined, it is seen that this concept is defined as a process that covers all areas of life by some researchers<sup>3-5</sup>, while it is defined only as the planning of business life by some researchers<sup>6,7</sup>. Career is not just a concept related to business life. On the contrary, it is a concept that deals with the private life of the

individual outside of his work life, his achievements here and his roles in his private life<sup>8</sup>. In this context, the concept of Career explains the phenomena that reveal the products that the individual reveals in her/his whole life, together with the professionalism that the person exhibits within the scope of her profession<sup>9</sup>.

Career planning is very important today<sup>10</sup>. Career planning is a phenomenon that is emphasized by both organizations and individuals<sup>11</sup>. The career planning process is a process in which all decision mechanisms are brought together and these mechanisms must be placed in a coordinated manner<sup>12</sup>. In general, career planning is considered by people as career choice. Career choice

is the most important step of career planning and besides career choice, career planning also takes into account many other variables<sup>13,64,65,69</sup>. It is a fact that when the career choice is compatible with the personality and life preferences of the individual, it will lead to a successful, high sense of satisfaction and happy life in business and social life<sup>14</sup>. In this context, career has been the focus of attention of many researchers and has been the subject of various studies<sup>15-19,66,67</sup>. It is known that the concept of career, which is often the subject of research, is also very popular in the sports community.

Sports career can be defined as a long-term process chosen voluntarily by an athlete and aiming to reach the top in this field of sports<sup>5,20,68</sup>. A sports career, which consists of various stages and transitions, is considered a miniature life process<sup>20-23</sup>. A sport-specific career transition is a set of stages or changes associated with a set of specific demands that athletes must overcome in order to successfully continue their sporting career and adapt to life after sport<sup>24</sup>. Research on the career development and career transition processes of athletes began to be examined in the 1960s<sup>25</sup>. In the historical process, research in the field of career development of athletes has evolved from research on the termination of sports career to studies in which the career is addressed towards a more holistic, life-long and multi-level approach<sup>26,70</sup>. In this context, the career phenomenon, which has been the research topic of many sports scientists for years, still maintains its popularity. In addition to many scientific articles, it is known that career issues are examined in postgraduate theses.

Therefore, it is very important to examine the postgraduate theses investigating the career issue and to make inferences as a result of this, as it will contribute to the literature.

**The aim of the research:** The aim of this research is to examine the postgraduate theses on career in sports sciences in Turkey in terms of parameters such as thesis level, publication year, data collection tool, purpose and result.

**MATERIAL AND METHODS**

In the literature, review studies are generally conducted with three different methods: systematic review, traditional review and meta-analysis<sup>27</sup>. This research was designed using the systematic review method.

The systematic review consists of synthesizing the findings obtained from the studies included in the research by examining all the studies published in the relevant field within the framework of various inclusion and exclusion criteria in order to answer a question or find a solution to a problem<sup>28-29</sup>.

**Inclusion criteria for the study:**

- Having a postgraduate thesis published in the field of sports sciences,
- Thesis research topic should be career related.

**Exclusion criteria from the study:**

- Having an unpublished postgraduate thesis in the field of sports sciences,
- The thesis research topic should not be career related

**Scanning Strategy:** Between 03.04.2022 and 17.04.2022, a total of 37 theses were reached as a result of the search made by scanning the keywords "kariyer" in Turkish and "career" in English by filtering the word "Sport" on the database of the National Thesis Center. As a result of the first evaluation made within the framework of the inclusion criteria, it was determined that there was an access barrier to 1 thesis, 2 theses were outside the field of sports sciences, and these theses were not included in the research by being grouped as those that were not suitable for the purpose of the research within the scope of exclusion criteria from the research. Within the scope of the inclusion criteria of the study, it was determined that there were 34 postgraduate theses and these theses were grouped as the theses suitable for the purpose of the research and included in the research (figure 1).

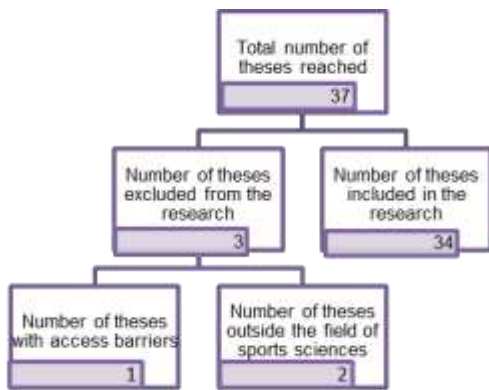


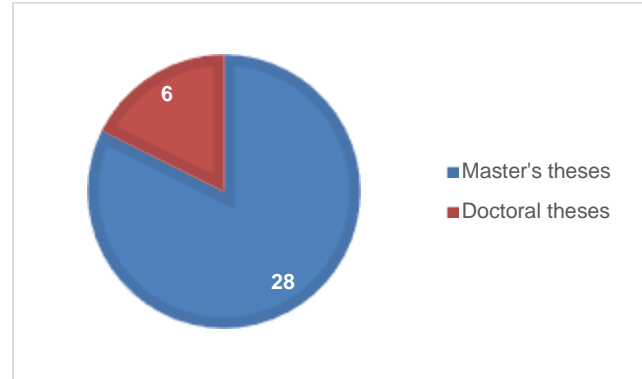
Figure 1: Total Number of Theses Reached, Excluded, Included

**Data collection:** In order to record the data obtained by the researchers, using the Excel 2016 (Microsoft Office) program, the information obtained according to the classification made as the author of the research, the thesis level, the year of publication, the participant group, the data collection tool, the purpose and the result were recorded in the appropriate place in the table. Afterwards, the findings of the research were presented in graphics and tables.

**RESULTS**

The data obtained from a total of 34 graduate theses, including 28

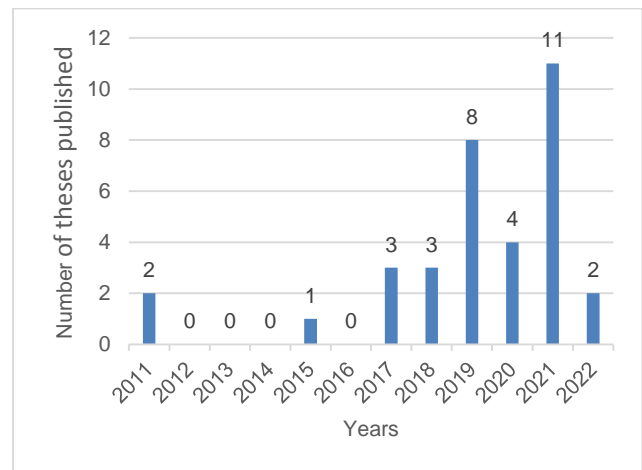
master's theses and 6 doctoral theses (Figure 2), are given in the table below (Table 1).



Graph 1: Number of master's theses and doctoral theses

Graph 1 shows the distribution of postgraduate theses on careers in sports sciences in Turkey according to their levels (doctorate, master's). According to Graph 1, it is seen that there are 6 doctoral theses and 28 master's theses about career in sports sciences in Turkey.

The distribution of the theses included in the research by years is given in graph 2.



Graph 2: Number of master's theses and doctoral theses

Graph 2 shows the distribution of postgraduate theses related to career in sports sciences in Turkey. According to Graph 2, the first thesis published on a career in sports sciences was in 2011. In 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2016, it is seen that no thesis about career was published. It is seen that the most published thesis is in 2021.

Data collection tools used in postgraduate theses on careers in sports sciences in Turkey are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Data collection tools

Data Collection Tools	Frequency of Use /Times
Semi-structured Interview Form	8
Career Adaptability Scale	4
Career Anxiety Scale	2
Life Satisfaction Scale	2
Beck Hopelessness Scale	2
Five Factor Personality Scale	2
Professional Career Awareness Scale	2
Career Satisfaction Scale	2
Career Barriers Scale for Female Academics	2
Family Support Scale in Choosing a Profession	1

Dual Career Competency Questionnaire for Athletes	1
Empowering and Disempowering Motivational Climate Questionnaires	1
Success Perception Inventory	1
Athlete Burnout	1
The Dispositional Flow and Intention to Continue Sports in Future Scales	1
Individual-Parent Career Goal Inconsistency Scale	1
Fast Big Five Personality Test	1
Professional Decision Regret Scale	1
Career Stress Scale	1
Career Determination Scale	1
Career Management Scale	1
Emotional Intelligence Scale	1
Professional Pleasure Scale for Referees.	1
Individual Competitiveness scale	1
Occupational Identity Status Assessment Scale	1
Entrepreneurial Intention Scale	1
Career Future Scale	1
Unnamed Scale Used	1
Organizational Citizenship Scale	1
Career Planning Scale	1
Individual-Organization Fit Scale	1
Individual Career Planning Scale	1

General Self-Efficacy Belief Scale	1
Self Leadership Scale	1
Managerial Competence Scale.	1
Future plan and anxiety scale	1
Versatile and Boundless Career Attitudes Scale	1
Personal Development Orientation Scale	1
Personality Scale	1
Athlete Career Scale	1
psychological well-being scale	1
Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale	1
Resilience Scale	1
Beck Depression Inventory	1
Scale of Professional Football Career Termination Experience	1

According to Table 1, it has been determined that Semi-structured Interview Form is mostly used as a data collection tool in postgraduate theses published on career in sports sciences in Turkey. In addition, the Career Adaptability Scale is the second most used data collection tool.

The participant groups, aims and results of the postgraduate theses on career in sports sciences in Turkey are given in Table 2.

Table 2: The participant groups, aims and results of the postgraduate theses

30	Participants	9 swimming athletes in total, 2 women and 7 men
	Aim	The aim is to examine the experiences of elite dual-career swimmers within the framework of the socio-ecological model.
	Result	It has been concluded that dual-career students should be supported by educational institutions, clubs, coaches and families in order for both their sportive studies and academic success to progress together.
31	Participants	912 sports high school students
	Aim	The aim is to reveal the relationship between career anxieties and family support in the professional development processes of Sports High School students in Turkey.
	Result	As a result of the research, it was determined that variables such as gender, age, monthly income of the parents, class, educational status of the parents and the name of the sports high school had an effect on the choice of profession and career anxiety.
32	Participants	A total of 221 athletes, 113 girls and 108 boys
	Aim	The aim is to examine the determinants and consequences of dual career competencies in Athletes.
	Result	As a result of the research, it was determined that success goals and supportive motivational climate were effective in determining the dual career competencies of the athletes. In addition, it was concluded that dual career competencies affect their intention to continue sports.
33	Participants	A total of 684 university students, 344 women and 340 men
	Aim	The aim is to adapt the Individual-Parent Career Goal Inconsistency Scale developed by Sawitri et al. (2020) into Turkish.
	Result	When the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients calculated for the scale and its sub-dimensions are examined, the validity and reliability of the scale, which consists of 15 items and three sub-dimensions, is high.
34	Participants	657 Spor İstanbul AŞ employees
	Aim	The aim is to evaluate the relationship between the perfectionism perception of sports organization employees and their career planning attitudes.
	Result	As a result of the research, it was concluded that the orientation of the employees in line with career planning can increase the perfectionism levels of the employees and the quality of the service provided.
35	Participants	528 students and 335 graduates
	Aim	The aim is to examine whether there is a statistical difference between the career planning and development status of the graduates and students of the Faculty of Sport Sciences.
	Result	Statistical differences were found between the career planning and development status of the graduates and students of the Faculty of Sport Sciences. This difference is affected by factors such as grade point average, income level, and extroversion or introversion.
36	Participants	185 civil servants working in the Provincial Directorate of Youth and Sports
	Aim	The aim is to investigate the relationship between career planning and emotional intelligence.
	Result	At the end of the research, a statistically weak relationship was found between the level of emotional intelligence and its sub-dimensions and career management.
37	Participants	500 recreation department students
	Aim	The aim is to investigate the mediating effect of career anxiety on the relationship between life satisfaction and hopelessness.
	Result	As a result of the mediation test, it was determined that the level of hopelessness had a significant indirect effect on life satisfaction, and therefore career satisfaction mediated the relationship between hopelessness and life satisfaction.
38	Participants	360 football referees, 347 men and 13 women
	Aim	The aim is to examine the career satisfaction and professional pleasure of licensed football referees.
	Result	As a result of the research; It has been determined that as career satisfaction in referees increases, professional pleasure also increases.
39	Participants	544 female and 472 male high school students
	Aim	The aim is to examine career anxieties of sports high school students and other high school students in the context of demographic and personality traits.
	Result	As a result of the research, it was determined that the career anxiety of the students studying at the sports high school was lower.
40	Participants	1374 students studying in the field of sports sciences
	Aim	The aim is to examine the career awareness levels of undergraduate students in sports sciences according to some demographic variables.
	Result	In the study, it was determined that the participants had upper-middle and high-level career awareness in terms of professional development disposition, professional readiness, professional awareness and professional self-confidence.
41	Participants	239 students studying at the School of Physical Education and Sports

	Aim	The aim is to examine the effects of the Department of Physical Education and Sports School students on their career adaptability abilities.
	Result	Considering the findings, it was concluded that there was no significant difference between the departments they studied and their career adjustment. However, a significant difference was found between the career adjustment of the participants and their gender in favor of women.
42	Participants	4 female and 4 male athletes who competed in individual branches at the 2016 Rio Olympic Games and are also university students
	Aim	The aim is to explore the dual career processes of elite athletes, covering both their academic and sports lives, and to explore the approaches that can facilitate dual career transitions.
	Result	As a result, it has been seen that it is important for the families, coaches, clubs, schools/universities, close environment and economic conditions to support these dual career processes in a balanced way for the successful progress of both academic and sports careers of athlete students.
43	Participants	206 football players playing in the U19 category
	Aim	The aim is to investigate the effect of individual competitiveness on career adaptability of football players in the Turkey U19 category.
	Result	As a result of the research, it has been determined that individual competitiveness has a significant and positive effect on career adaptability.
44	Participants	1120 students of faculty of sports sciences
	Aim	The aim is to examine the relationship between professional identity status, entrepreneurial intentions and career planning attitudes in line with the views of students studying sports in Faculties of Sport Sciences and Schools of Physical Education and Sports.
	Result	As a result of the research, it was seen that variables such as gender, age, monthly income of parents, class, educational status of parents affect students while making future career plans. In addition, it has been observed that women are more determined than men when making career planning. In terms of entrepreneurship, it has been seen that men are more prominent. It has been determined that as the age gets older, future planning becomes more prominent. It is seen that especially students with low monthly income of their families experience more anxiety about the future, and it has been determined that the high educational status of their parents provides convenience for students when setting career goals.
45	Participants	255 personnel working in institutions affiliated to Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Youth and Sports
	Aim	The aim is to determine the dimensions of career barriers for female employees and to investigate whether there is a statistically significant difference between these dimensions and the variables of gender, education level, age, professional experience, marital status and job position.
	Result	As a result of the research, the variables such as gender, age, education level, professional title, working hours, marital status of the personnel participating in the research and the sub-dimensions of the research scale were examined and significant differences were found especially in the dimension of perceptions regarding gender roles.
46	Participants	10 individuals who preside over a sports federation
	Aim	The aim is to determine the career anchors that are dominant in the individual careers of sports managers.
	Result	As a result of the research, it has been found that the federation presidents are the dominant career anchors of service and dedication.
47	Participants	484 volunteers working in the central and provincial organization of the general directorate of sports
	Aim	The aim is to examine the relationship between career satisfaction and organizational citizenship levels of the general directorate of sports personnel in terms of various variables.
	Result	As a result of the research, when the relationship between organizational citizenship sub-dimensions and career satisfaction levels was examined, it was determined that there was a positive relationship between career satisfaction and altruism sub-dimension of organizational citizenship.
48	Participants	176 personnel working in the Ministry headquarters and Ankara Provincial Directorate of Youth Services and Sports
	Aim	The aim is to examine the relationship between individual-organization fit and individual career planning of experts working in the Ministry of Youth and Sports in terms of title, gender and age, marital status, education level, department graduated, graduated school, professional experience period, working time in the institution, income level, foreign language level and type of entry to the institution.
	Result	As a result of the research, it was found that there is a positive relationship between the individual-organization harmony of the personnel working in the expert staff and their career planning. In the variables of age, department graduated, professional experience, income status and foreign language level, it was concluded that the individual-organization fit differed according to the dependent variable, but there was no statistically significant difference in terms of the variables in career planning.
49	Participants	1843 Student of Faculty of Sports Sciences
	Aim	The aim is to determine the career awareness perceptions of students who receive sports education at universities.
	Result	According to the analyzes made on the vocational career awareness perception averages of the university students included in the research, the professional career awareness perceptions of the university students participating in the research were found to be at a high level in general.
50	Participants	442 athletes
	Aim	The aim is to examine the future concerns and individual career planning of the athletes in the Olympic preparation centers in Turkey.
	Result	It has been determined that gender makes a significant difference in the hopelessness of the future in athletes and men are more hopeless than women, but the hopelessness of female and male athletes decreases as they get to know their own abilities.
51	Participants	303 sports managers
	Aim	The aim is to examine the mediating role of career satisfaction in the relationships between self-efficacy beliefs and self-leadership beliefs and managerial competency levels of sports managers working in the central and provincial organization of the General Directorate of Sports.
	Result	It has been determined that self-efficacy belief has a decreasing effect on self-leadership belief and an increasing effect on career satisfaction. It has been determined that the sense of career satisfaction has a decreasing effect on the perception of managerial competence, and the belief in self-leadership has no significant effect on the sense of career satisfaction.
52	Participants	103 students
	Aim	The aim is to determine the career plans and attitudes towards the sports sector of undergraduate students at Istanbul University-Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Sports Sciences.
	Result	In the research, it was stated that the students wanted to be in the top positions of the sports sector and at the same time, one of the reasons for choosing this sector was the love of the profession.
53	Participants	471 personnel working in the Central Organization of the Ministry of Youth and Sports
	Aim	The aim is to determine the predictive effect of the personal development orientations of the employees in the Central Organization of the Ministry of Youth and Sports on their versatile and unlimited career attitudes. Another aim of the study is to determine the statistical differentiation of employees' versatile and unlimited career attitudes according to various variables and to determine the relationship between two career attitudes.
	Result	It was observed that ministry employees preferred the multi-career attitude more than the two career attitudes. Among the sub-dimensions, it was determined that they preferred unlimited thinking and directing their own career. The sub-dimension with the

		highest average in the personal development scale was the dimension of purposeful behavior. On the other hand, it was seen that the personal development orientations of the participants had a positive effect on the multifaceted career attitude. Similarly, it was determined that personal development orientations have a positive effect on unlimited career attitude. It has been concluded that the demographic variable that affects the multi-faceted career attitude the most is the position, and the demographic variable that affects the unlimited career attitude is the age variable.
54	Participants	144 lecturers of the faculty of sports sciences
	Aim	The aim is to determine the personality traits of female academics at the faculty of sports sciences and the career barriers they have encountered in the academic process.
	Result	While the career barriers of academicians differ statistically according to the variables of title, income status and administrative duty; It has been determined that there is no significant difference according to the variables of age, marital status, number of children, and years of seniority.
55	Participants	334 amateur football players
	Aim	The aim is to investigate the personality traits and career adaptability of amateur football players.
	Result	As a result of the research, it was determined that the personality traits of responsibility and open-mindedness were the determining variables on career adaptability.
56	Participants	270 athletes
	Aim	The aim is to determine the career planning activities of the athletes who train within the Turkish Olympic Preparation Centers and will participate or are likely to participate in the Olympics. It is also to determine the factors that are effective in sports success.
	Result	In the research; It has been determined that the career planning activities of the athletes in the 22-25 age range are at a higher level. In addition, it has been concluded that the athletes who have a longer stay in the Olympic Preparation Centers in Turkey achieve better grades in the Olympic branches.
57	Participants	310 female lecturers in the faculty of sports sciences
	Aim	The aim is to examine the career barriers of female academicians who teach in the field of sports in higher education.
	Result	As a result of the research, it has been determined that female academicians have career barriers due to organizational culture and policies, multi-role playing, organizational conditions, stereotypes. In addition, it was determined that they were exposed to mobbing acts. Also, it was determined that job satisfaction and organizational commitment perceptions decreased depending on career barriers.
58	Participants	32 students from the faculty of sports sciences
	Aim	The aim is to investigate the career planning strategies and self-leadership skills of the students of the recreation department, in addition, to reveal how the students manage their career planning processes in terms of human resources and what kind of contributions they make.
	Result	Almost all of the participants stated that before they started to study in the recreation department, this department was not included in their career plans. In addition, it has been revealed that the students partially know the fields of study related to recreation while they are studying, but they do not plan to work in the field of recreation after graduation. When students' self-leadership behaviors are examined, it is seen that the majority of them can motivate themselves for the work they need to do.
59	Participants	12 individuals working in the Central Organization of the General Directorate of Youth and Sports
	Aim	The aim is to determine the career barriers of female managers in sports organizations.
	Result	As a result, it has been determined that sports organizations, like other institutions, are not free from prejudices. In addition, it has been observed that organizational barriers are more pronounced in terms of career barriers.
60	Participants	37 athletes who have made degrees in the Olympics and are Turkish citizens
	Aim	The aim is to investigate the level of career planning of Turkish athletes, who made a high in the Olympics, when they did sports and when they quit sports.
	Result	It has been concluded that the Turkish athletes who made a high in the Olympics could not make an effective career planning in terms of sports, and they tended or had to turn to different professions outside the field of sports.
61	Participants	A total of 192 athletes, 100 women and 92 men
	Aim	The primary purpose of the study is to examine the predictive effect and relationship of elite athletes' self-esteem, depression and psychological resilience levels in post-sport life on psychological well-being.
	Result	As a result of the research, it was found that there is a moderate positive and significant relationship between the psychological well-being levels of elite athletes in life after sports, and their self-esteem and psychological resilience levels. In addition, it was determined that there was a high/moderate negative significant relationship between depression levels and psychological well-being, self-esteem and psychological resilience levels. In addition, it has been determined that the self-esteem, depression and psychological resilience levels of elite athletes in life after sports have a significant predictive effect on psychological well-being.
62	Participants	12 elite tennis players
	Aim	The aim is to examine the reasons why elite tennis players quit tennis.
	Result	At the end of the study, it was determined that some of the athletes quit tennis voluntarily, and some of them had to quit tennis compulsorily. In addition, it has been concluded that some athletes quit tennis due to health problems, while others due to financial conditions and anxiety of failure.
63	Participants	384 athletes who quit professional football
	Aim	The purpose of this research is to determine the professional football players perceptions of retirement experience in Turkey and to display, in a comparative way, whether these perceptions acquire a difference according to the independent variables obtained through personal information of individuals.
	Result	In the research, it has been determined that professional football players usually end their football careers with their own decisions at an average age of 27.22.

## DISCUSSION

According to the research findings, it has been determined that there are 6 doctorate and 28 master's theses on career in sports sciences in Turkey (Graph 1). In addition, it was determined that the most published postgraduate theses were published in 2021 (Graph 2). Also according to the research findings, it has been determined that Semi-structured Interview Form is mostly used as a data collection tool in postgraduate theses published on career in sports sciences in Turkey (Table 1). When the participant groups of the studies were examined, it was determined that mostly athletes, sports managers, academicians and students studying in the field of sports sciences participated as participants (Table 2). When the

theses included in the research were examined in terms of purpose and result, it was determined that subjects such as career planning, barriers encountered in career planning, career plans of athletes, dual career, professional career plans of sports science students, career satisfaction, the relationship of career with other subjects such as emotional intelligence and life satisfaction were frequently investigated.

As a result, it can be said that the number of postgraduate theses on careers in sports sciences is increasing in Turkey. In addition, it was determined that the researches were carried out with different participant groups, and in this context, it can be said that the researches have a wide spectrum. In addition to these

results, it can be said that graduate theses also have very rich content in terms of purpose and results.

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